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COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

MONDAY, 15th NOVEMBER, 1943

Vol. III—No. 1

OFFICIAL REPORT

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PUBLISHED BY THE MANAGER OF PUBLICATIONS, DELHI
PRINTED BY THE MANAGER, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS, NEW DELHI
1943

Price Five Annas.

Copies of the Debates of the Legislative Assembly and of the Council of State are obtainable on sale from the Manager of Publications, Civil Lines, Delhi.

THE

COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE FOURTH COUNCIL OF STATE)

VOLUME III—1943

COUNCIL OF STATE

Monday, 15th November, 1943

The Council met in the Council Chamber of the Council House in New Delhi at Eleven of the Clock, being the First Day of the Fifteenth Session of the Fourth Council of State, pursuant to section 63-D (2) of the Government of India Act, as set out in the Ninth Schedule to the Government of India Act, 1935. The Honourable the President (the Honourable Sir Maneckji Byramji Dadabhoy, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., LL.D., Barrister-at-Law) was in the Chair.

MEMBERS SWORN :

The Honourable Malik Sir Firoz Khan Noon, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E. (Defence Member).

Mr. Henry Carlos Prior, C.S.I., C.I.E. (Labour Secretary).

Diwan Bahadur Sir Narayanswami Gopalaswami Ayyangar, C.S.I., C.I.E. (Madras : Non-Muhammadan).

Mr. Mohendra Lal Das (Nominated Non-Official).

Mr. Binay Ranjan Sen (Nominated Official).

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Honourable Members, I have a message to deliver to you from His Excellency the Governor General. The message reads thus :—

" *Honourable Members of the Council of State,*

It is customary for a new Viceroy to address both Houses of the Indian Legislature at the first opportunity. I have decided to depart from precedent, and shall deliver no address during the November session. My reasons for this decision are first that whereas my predecessors assumed office in April and were able to devote several months to the study of the Indian situation before an opportunity of addressing the Legislature occurred, I assumed office in October, less than three weeks before the opening of the November session ; and secondly that for the time being my energies must be very largely devoted to the study and treatment of the food problem—a matter upon which I do not feel that I could make a comprehensive statement in the immediate future. It is my intention to address both Chambers at an early stage of the Budget session of 1944.

I felt that my decision not to address the Indian Legislature, or either Chamber thereof, during the current session should be formally communicated to each Chamber on the earliest possible date, and I therefore caused a like message to be conveyed to the Legislative Assembly on the 8th November, I realise that Honourable Members will have become aware of the terms of that message ; but I have not felt myself justified, for this reason, in refraining from addressing a formal message to this Chamber.

WAVELL,
F. M.,
Viceroy and Governor-General."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

SPEECH OF SIR STANLEY REED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS REGARDING THE EASEMENT IN THE BRITISH FINANCE EFFECTED BY THE GENEROSITY OF THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT.

1. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the following passage in the speech of Sir Stanley Reed, in the House of Commons on or about the 22nd July, 1943 :—

" The Chancellor of the Exchequer drew the attention of the House to easement in the British finance effected by the generosity of the Indian Government. He

hoped that on some convenient occasion, the Chancellor would tell the House how far the ease in finance had been effected by the action of the Indian Government in its method of meeting the very heavy expenditure of the armed forces in the Middle East, and Far East (*vide* the "*Hindustan Times*", dated the 24th July, 1943) ?

(*b*) Will Government make a statement indicating the various phases of India's generosity, and the approximate amount of the expenditure borne by India in connection with the armed forces of the Middle East and the Far East separately ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: (*a*) and (*b*) I would invite the attention of the Honourable Member to the reply given by the Honourable the Finance Member to Question No. 300 put in by Dr. P. N. Banerjea in the last session of the Legislative Assembly on the subject of Sir Stanley Reed's speech as quoted by Reuters. The reply reads as follows:—

"My attention was drawn to the Reuter's telegram concerned and on reference to London I have been informed that owing to an error in transmission "India" was wrongly substituted for "Canada" in the telegram as published in this country. The reference in the Commons was actually to a statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding the easement in British finances effected by the generosity of Canada."

DISCUSSION OF PLANS FOR AIR TRANSPORT BY BRIG.-GENERAL ALFRED CRITCHLEY WITH GOVERNMENT.

2. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Is it a fact that Brig.-General Alfred Critchley, Director General of British Overseas Airways, who was recently on a tour to Africa, India and the Near East, discussed with Government plans for air transport, and new civil air routes to all parts of the World ? If so, will Government give a general outline of the proposal, with special reference to the position which India is expected to occupy in any scheme of aviation expenditure, and post-war air routes ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: General Critchley, D. G., B. O. A. C., visited India in October. He came for the inspection of the B. O. A. C. organisation in India. He did not discuss any such plans. He did see me and the officers of the Government of India. It was a courtesy visit.

INVITATION OF REPRESENTATIVE INDIAN EDITORS AND JOURNALISTS TO VISIT BRITIAN.

3. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Is there any proposal to invite representative Indian editors and journalists to visit Britain in the near future ? If so, what would be the method of selection, and the number of those to be invited.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: The matter has been the subject of correspondence between the Government of India and His Majesty's Government, and is still under consideration.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Have Government taken into account the vote of censure passed on them by the Assembly the other day in this connection ?

(No answer.)

REPORT OF THE DELEGATE ON INDIA TO THE HOT-SPRING CONFERENCE.

4. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Have Government received any report from Dr. Arkroyd a delegate of India to the Hot-spring Conference or from any other delegate ? If so, has a copy been placed in the Library of the House ? If not, why not ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: The Government of India have received a report from the Indian Delegation to the Conference. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

STATEMENT ON WAR SITUATION.

5. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government make a statement on the War situation, with special reference to the part played by Indian troops in different theatres of War, since the statement was last made on the floor of this House.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: Sir, I lay a statement on the table.

Statement.

Since the last statement on the floor of this House on the progress of the war, the cause of the United Nations has prospered and our armies have scored considerable successess. North Africa and Sicily have been cleared of the enemy and Anglo-American forces, after a stern struggle to establish a secure foothold on the beaches at Salerno, have now established themselves firmly in the Southern part of Italy. They are at present advancing upon Rome.

So also on the East European front, our Russian allies have gained notable victories and have driven the German invader beyond the line of the Dnieper, into the Ukraine and White Russia proper. The heavy losses which the Nazis are suffering in this series of blows both in East Europe and in Italy, together with the widespread destruction brought on Germany by the Bomber Commands of the United States Army Air Force and the Royal Air Force have combined to change the whole complexion of the war. It would be wrong to be complacent about an early outcome of the struggle, but it may safely be said that in Europe at least, the United Nations have turned the corner and are now on the road to ultimate certain success.

In the clearance of the Mediterranean and its conversion from Mussolini's " Mare Nostrum " into " Cunningham's Pond ", both the Royal Indian Navy and the Indian Army have been privileged to play a worthy part. In the mountainous terrain of Tunisia, Indian troops came into action in North Africa for the last time. The 4th Indian Division, still at that time consisting of only 2 Brigades, that is to say 4 Indian and 2 British battalions, of infantry and supporting troops had been specially training against this possible need while the 8th Army was fighting its way to Tripoli.

Fresh and ready for action, this famous Indian Formation was given a special role in General Montgomery's onslaught against the Mareth Line. Indian, Gurkha and British troops of the 5th and 7th Indian Brigades fought a spirited series of hand to hand actions against German and Italian. Their successes in every engagement from the Matmata mountains right through to Enfidaville in Tunisia are well known to all Honourable Members through the full accounts published in the press.

It was a happy coincidence that when the 8th Army reached the end of its advance before the extremely strong Axis positions North of Enfidaville and when General Alexander called for reinforcement of the First Army for one final blow right at the heart of the enemy's resistance in Africa, this role fell to two famous divisions which had been in at the beginning—having fought side by side at Sidi Barrani in the Western Desert in December 1940. These were the British 7th Armoured Division and the 4th Indian Division. Both were in at the end. They led the onslaught against Tunis and smashed through to the capital city within a few days.

The finale came when, as our forces swept on beyond Tunis to complete the annihilation of Axis resistance in North Africa, General Von Arnim, the Axis Commander, with his whole headquarters surrendered to the British Royal Sussex Battalion of the 4th Indian Division and to the Gurkhas. That was a fitting historic conclusion to the great Indo-British team which has played so prominent a part throughout the campaigns in Africa.

Honourable Members will recall that the Duke of Aosta surrendered to the 5th Division on the heights of Amba Alagi in Abyssinia.

An indication of the high morale, excellent training and unsurpassed fighting spirit of the 4th Indian Division in these final actions in Tunisia was provided by the 138 immediate awards which His Majesty has made to Indian Army officers and men of the Division. Two fine Victoria Crosses were won—the first by Subedar Lal Bahadur Thapa of the 9th Gurkhas and the second by the late Havildar Major Chhelu Ram who was killed in action. This latter was the second Victoria Cross to be won by the 4/6th Rajputana Rifles.

In the next stage of the Mediterranean campaign, the Royal Indian Navy came into the picture. Honourable Members will have read how His Majesty's Indian ships were present at zero hour on July the 10th when Allied troops first disembarked on the beaches of Sicily. They helped to escort and to protect large convoys between North African bases and Sicilian ports and during the ensuing weeks the Royal Indian Navy continued to co-operate with the Royal Navy, the American, Greek and Netherlands Navies in the tremendous tasks of keeping our invasion forces supplied with reinforcements of men and material. I am happy to say that in the discharge of their duties His Majesty's Indian ships have earned praise from the naval authorities in the Mediterranean and have been thanked by the Commander-in-Chief in the Levant for their valuable assistance.

On the island of Sicily, Indian Troops were again to the fore. In company with their comrades-in-arms of the American and British armies, units of the Indian Army and certain Indian pioneer companies were amongst those employed in beach groups during the original Allied landings in Sicily. It should be clearly realised that these beach groups have to discharge an important fighting role as well as carry out other arduous duties. They include personnel of the Navy, Army and R. A. F. and they are charged with landing and maintaining assault forces during operations. Thus the beach group includes units and detachments of all arms of the Services both British and Indian, comprising infantry, gunners, sappers, signals, supply and transport and ordnance; their equipment includes the most modern types of mechanised arms designed to speed up a landing in force.

With the leading waves of the assault troops, the first detachment of the beach group went into action and helped to oust the enemy from the sea-shore. They then remained in the vicinity of the beaches when the assaulting troops had gone forward and organised the consolidation of the area in which the remainder of the forces subsequently landed. Indian troops engaged in this phase of the Operations were fighting soldiers in every sense of the term who had to be prepared at any time to beat off attacks from both the ground and the air. Our information is

that they fulfilled these tasks to the utmost satisfaction of their commanders and that their behaviour both in the field of battle and off it, has been excellent.

Now that Italy has collapsed, Indian troops continue to pursue the Nazi Armies into Europe proper. Indian units are at present in Italy and have been in contact with the enemy. Operating in a difficult mountainous sector, they recently beat back the enemy in a series of encounters and were last reported as having reached the line of the Trigno River. This Indian formation is equipped with the latest weapons, such as the 17-pounder gun. Its troops are imbued with the same spirit of clan in attack and fortitude in adversity which made their fellow-countrymen such fine fighting material in North Africa; they may be relied upon to add fresh laurels to their country's fame.

Turning now to Asia, on our Eastern Frontier we have not as yet victories to report on a par with those in the Western Desert, although there have been notable successes secured by American and Australian troops against the Japanese in the South West Pacific. On the border of Burma, the position has remained more or less static. Here, as previously in the West, we have had to wait for all the tools necessary to do the job on a full scale. Nevertheless, here also the same fighting qualities of our Indian troops have been worthily displayed, often in adverse and disheartening circumstances.

On the Arakan Front it was to a larger extent circumstances outside the control of the fighting man which turned a moderate initial success into an equally moderate reverse. Almost every Indian battalion which advanced with their British Comrades into Arakan at the end of last year was involved in spirited actions with the enemy from which they emerged with great credit and in which they showed themselves, man for man, more than equal to the Japanese.

A splendid V.C. was won by Havildar Parkash Singh, 8th Punjab Regiment, on the recommendation, not of his own Commanding Officer, but of a British battalion, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers which, fighting side by side with the Havildar's unit, warmly commended the gallantry they witnessed. The 83 immediate awards for the Arakan operations, and the citations therefor, speak for themselves as to the fighting spirit shown by individuals and by units of the Indian Army in many phases of those operations—operations which, despite the disappointing nature of the cumulative result, did in fact inflict far heavier damage in men and material on the enemy than was suffered by ourselves.

Elsewhere on the Burma Front, Indian and Gurkha troops with their British and Burman comrades have maintained a heartening patrol ascendancy over the enemy, while Gurkhas and Indian troops shared with others the dangers of the expedition into Central Burma under the command of Brigadier Wingate.

The monsoon prevented any large-scale ground offensive by either side, but it did not prevent the Royal Air Force and the United States Army Air Force from keeping up the momentum of their attacks upon Japanese bases and lines of supply. These harassing raids have undoubtedly had their effect in increasing the difficulties under which our enemy labours.

Nor did the monsoon prevent our troops from continuing their offensive patrolling in all weathers. This patrol ascendency, which is still being maintained, is important from several points of view. It is good for the morale of our troops, since it enables them to know that they are man for man more than a match for the enemy. It is helpful to us because it brings in information about enemy troop dispositions and strength on various sectors of the front, while at the same time it denies such information to the enemy.

An example of the moral ascendency established by our men is the clash which took place in the Chin Hills last May, when Havildar Gaje Ghale of the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles won the second Victoria Cross to be awarded on the Burma front. In this engagement Havildar Gaje Ghale led his platoon on to capture a precipitous enemy position in the face of heavy mortar and machine-gun fire, ignoring his own wounds while he spurred his comrades on to victory in bitter hand-to-hand fighting which inflicted heavy casualties on the Japanese and gained us a key objective. As long as this spirit continues to animate our soldiers, India may rest assured that her defence and offence against the enemy are in safe hands.

SALE OF BRITISH SUBJECTS AS SLAVES IN MECCA.

6. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Has the attention of Government been drawn to the statement of Major Lyons, Conservative M. P., in Parliament that British subjects, including a Baluchi woman and child, have been sold in the slave market of Mecca, and urging "that in future no British subject, African or Indian, of either sex, will be sold as slave there" (*vide* the "*Hindustan Times*", dated the 14th August 1943, page 4)?

Do Government propose to take necessary steps to enquire into this matter, and see that no Indian subjects are sold as slaves in Mecca, or elsewhere?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: In reply to Major Lyon's question in the House of Commons, Mr. Anthony Eden has already stated that the Saudi Arabian Government has given an assurance that no British protected person or child has been sold as a slave in Mecca. A copy of Mr. Eden's statement as reproduced in Reuter's message of 23rd September, 1943 is laid on the table.

Mr. Eden's Statement.

Westminster, September 23:—

Mr. Anthony Eden told the Commons that the Saudi Arabian Government has given the assurance that no British protected person or child had been sold as a slave in Mecca. This was

in reply to a question whether he would enquire into the case of a Baluchi woman and child who it was alleged, were among those exposed for sale in Mecca.

Mr. Eden added that the British Government had made every possible effort to suppress slave traffic in the Persian Gulf which before this war had greatly diminished. But owing to disturbed conditions on the south Persian coast in the last two years there had unfortunately been a slight recrudescence of smuggling of slaves to the Arabian coast. Mr. Eden said that he had invited the co-operation of the Saudi Arabian Government in putting a stop to this traffic. He was assured that they would take all possible steps to prevent smuggling of slaves from overseas into their territory which was contrary not only to the Islamic law but also to the Saudi Arabian Government's laws.—*Reuter.*

PLAN FOR A DIRECT AIR SERVICE BETWEEN NEW YORK AND INDIA.

7. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Are Government aware that a direct air service between New York and India, *via* Alaska and China is being planned by North-West Airlines, to be inaugurated immediately after the War?

Will Government make a statement on this project, indicating the terms and conditions, if any, on which such an air service will be permitted to be operated in this country; and the financial implications on India?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: The Government of India are not aware of any proposal for the operation of such an air service. The latter part of the question does not, therefore, arise.

CREATION OF THE "AFRICA STAR".

8. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Are Government aware of the announcement made by the British Premier, Mr. Churchill, in the House of Commons, about the 3rd August, 1943, that the British Government have decided "to commemorate the victory in North Africa by the creation of the Africa Star; and at the same time to institute the 1939-43 star as a reward for those in the services who have taken part in hard fighting elsewhere during the first four years of the War"? Will Government state if Indians are eligible for these distinctions and if so, how many of them have received the awards, or selected for them?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: Indians will be eligible for the "Africa Star" and the 1939-43 Star in the same way as others. No awards have so far been made as His Majesty's Government have not yet finally decided upon the conditions governing such awards.

NUMBER OF MUSLIM COMMISSIONERS OF INCOME-TAX.

9. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will Government state the total number of Commissioners of Income-tax in India and the number of Muslim Commissioners of Income-tax?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: There are 9 Commissioners of Income-tax in India. None of them is a Muslim.

APPOINTMENT OF A MUSLIM COMMISSIONER OF INCOME-TAX IN THE PUNJAB.

10. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Do Government propose to appoint a Muslim Commissioner of Income-tax in the Punjab, if and when the present Commissioner vacates the post?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: Appointment to the post of Commissioner of Income-tax is made by selection and Government will consider the claims of suitable Muslim officers, if any, should the present Commissioner vacate the post.

PAUCITY OF MUSLIM ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS OF INCOME-TAX IN THE PUNJAB CIRCLE.

11. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will Government state whether it is a fact that there is one Muslim Assistant Commissioner of Income-tax out of seven in the Punjab, N. W. F. and Delhi Provinces? If so, state the reason for not appointing the due number.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: The Honourable Member's information is correct. There is no specific reservation however of Assistant Commissioners' posts for Muslims, since appointment to these posts is made wholly by selection and all the seven posts are open to Muslims.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Has any Muslim been appointed to any of these seven posts so far ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Does the Honourable Member's question pertain to the past ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: I cannot answer the question off hand.

INFRINGEMENT OF HOME DEPARTMENT RESOLUTION REGARDING APPOINTMENT OF MUSLIM STENOGRAPHERS.

12. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: (*a*) Is it a fact that the Delhi Muslim Association brought to the notice of the Central Board of Revenue the infringement of the Home Department Resolution No. F. 14/17-B.-Establishment, dated 4th July, 1934, in regard to the appointment of stenographers ?

(*b*) Will Government state what action was taken on it or what action they propose to take thereon ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: (*a*) The Delhi Muslim Association did bring to the notice of the Board the short recruitment of Muslims in the stenographers' grade, but it was found on examination that there was no infringement of the orders contained in the Home Department Resolution of 1934.

(*b*) Necessary instructions have since been issued that the principles laid down in the Home Department Resolution of 1934 should be applied in future to appointments made to posts in the stenographers' grade.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will the Honourable Member see if the past injustices are rightened ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: I do not think there are any past injustices. The Central Board of Revenue does not lay down its own policy in respect of communal representation in appointments to the stenographers' grades. It is decided upon in the Home Department. When the Honourable Member refers to orders issued by the Central Board of Revenue in this matter, the position is that the Central Board of Revenue merely passes on the instructions contained in the Home Department Resolutions. It was in 1942 that the change of policy was decided upon by the Home Department, and Commissioners of Income-tax were duly informed of the change of policy.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: What is the new policy ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: It is not my subject; it is dealt with by the Home Department. But so far as my recollection goes the new policy is to regard appointment to the stenographers' grade as being direct appointment for purposes of communal representation, and not as appointment by promotion from clerks' grades.

NUMBER OF REVERTED HINDU AND MUSLIM OFFICERS IN THE INCOME-TAX DEPARTMENT, PUNJAB.

13. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will Government state the number of Muslims and Hindus separately as Income-tax Officers, Inspectors and Head Clerks reverted in the Punjab in 1941-42 and 1942-43 ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: With the permission of the Chair, I will reply to questions Nos. 13, 14 and 15 together.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Certainly.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: The information has been called for and will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I am very sorry to note that this Supreme Council has been getting more and more communal lately.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Communalism is the breath of life now.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS: And the curse of India !

PROMOTION OF HINDU AND MUSLIM OFFICERS IN THE INCOME-TAX DEPARTMENT.

*14. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will Government state the number of Muslims and Hindus separately promoted by selection as Head Clerks, Inspectors and Income-tax Officers ?

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* For answer to this question *see* answer to question No. 13.

SHORTAGE OF MUSLIMS IN THE INCOME-TAX DEPARTMENT, PUNJAB CIRCLE.

*15. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will Government state whether there is shortage of Muslims in the grade of Inspectors, Head Clerks and Stenographers in the Income Tax Department, Punjab, N.W.F. and Delhi Provinces? If so, do Government propose to make up the shortage by appointing Muslims to the Stenographers grade. If not, why not?

ENQUIRY REGARDING THE DISSATISFACTION OF MUSLIM TAX-PAYERS IN DELHI.

16. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will Government institute an enquiry especially at Delhi and take action to remove the dissatisfaction prevalent amongst the Muslim Tax-payers?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: Government are not aware that any dissatisfaction exists amongst Muslim Tax-payers in Delhi.

APPOINTMENT OF ADEQUATE NUMBER OF MUSLIM ASSESSING STAFF IN THE INCOME-TAX DEPARTMENT, DELHI.

17. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will Government appoint due number of Muslim assessing staff, *viz.*, the Income-tax Officers and Inspectors in Delhi? If not, why not?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: The claims of Muslim Officers are always considered whenever appointments to posts of Income-tax Officers and Inspectors are made at Delhi.

VACATION BY MILITARY PERSONNEL OF THE BUNGALOW PURCHASED FOR MR. JINHA.

18. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR RAM SARAN DAS: Will the Government state whether it is a fact that a bungalow of the Davies Road, Lahore, now occupied by Military Personnel, which has been purchased for Mr. Jinha is being vacated by the military authorities for his residence? If so, why?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: Enquiries have been made, but on the basis of the particulars given by the Honourable Member, I have not been able to verify the facts mentioned in the question. If the Honourable Member will let me know the number and exact location of the bungalow I will have further enquiries made.

ALLOCATION OF EXPENDITURE INCURRED ON THE BUILDINGS FOR THE SOUTH EAST ASIA COMMAND.

19. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR RAM SARAN DAS: Will Government state whether the burden of the expenditure incurred, being incurred and to be incurred on the building establishment, etc., for South East Asia Command will be borne by the War Office or by Indian Government? If by Indian Government, why so?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: All such expenditure will be borne by His Majesty's Government.

ALLOCATION OF EXPENDITURE ON THE CONQUEST OF BURMA.

20. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR RAM SARAN DAS: Will Government state as to whether the expenditure being incurred and to be incurred on the reconquest of Burma will be borne by the War Office? If not, why not?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: I would refer the Honourable Member to the reply given by the Honourable the Finance Member on 21st September 1942 to Mr. Neogy's question No. 48 in the Legislative Assembly.

TRANSFER OF THE APPELLATE ASSISTANT INCOME-TAX COMMISSIONERS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT.

21. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR S. K. DAS: Do Government propose to put the Appellate Assistant Income-tax Commissioners under the Legislative Department of the Central Government as has been done in the case of Income-tax Appellate Tribunal? If not, why not?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: With the permission of the Chair, I will answer questions 21 and 22 together.

No. In this connection, I invite the Honourable Member's attention to the reply given by the Honourable the Finance Member on the 19th February, 1942, to a Resolution moved by Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi on the 12th February, 1942 (pages 340-341 of the Assembly Debates) as also to the reply given by him on the 12th February, 1943, to a similar question asked by Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (pages 154-155 of the Assembly Debates).

* For answer to this question, *see* answer to question No. 13.

INTERFERENCE WITH THE WORK OF THE APPELLATE ASSISTANT INCOME-TAX COMMISSIONER.

*22. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR S. K. DAS: Is it a fact that there is regular interference of the Income-tax Commissioner and the Central Board of Revenue in the matter of disposal of appeals by the Assistant Appellate Commissioners and confidential instructions are given to the Assistant Appellate Commissioners not to interfere as far as possible with the assessment orders of the Income-tax Officers where the Revenue is affected?

REVERSION OF MR. S. G. SEN GUPTA, APPELLATE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER.

23. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR S. K. DAS: Will Government state as to the reason why Mr. S. G. Sen Gupta, M.A., B.L., who was the Appellate Assistant Commissioner, Dacca Range, was reverted to the post of Income-tax Officer in December, 1942?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: Mr. Sen Gupta was reverted because of his unfitness to hold the post of Assistant Commissioner.

APPOINTMENT OF A JUNIOR OFFICER AS OFFICIATING ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ADVISER, SUPPLY DEPARTMENT.

24. THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: (*a*) Is it a fact that a very junior officer of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service has been appointed officiating Additional Financial Adviser, Supply Department? If so, what is his name and the length of his service?

(*b*) Was this officer brought into the Supply Department from the Military Finance Department and has he superseded practically all the senior officers of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service already serving in the financial section of the Supply Department? If so, how many officers has he superseded and what is the length of service of the senior-most officer among them. Why have they been superseded?

(*c*) Do Government propose to appoint one of the senior officers amongst them to officiate as Additional Financial Adviser.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the Government of India, Finance Department Resolution No. F.28(6)-Ex.II/38, dated the 2nd February, 1939, which was published in the Gazette of India, constituting a special pool of officers encadred to serve the needs of the Finance and Commerce Departments. The post of Additional Financial Adviser in the Supply Finance Department being a temporary addition to the pool cadre has ordinarily to be filled by an officer of that cadre. That being the case, the question of the claims of non-pool senior officers of the Indian Audit and Account Service for appointment to the post does not arise, so long as a suitable pool officer is available.

SUBSTANTIVE APPOINTMENT OF A JUNIOR OFFICER AS ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ADVISER.

25. THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: Will Government state whether the Additional Financial Adviser, Supply Department, will soon assume charge of the post of Financial Commissioner for Railways? When this happens is it proposed to appoint substantively the junior officer referred to in the previous question, who is officiating as Additional Financial Adviser.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: The previous incumbent of the post of Additional Financial Adviser, Supply Finance Department, has already assumed charge of the post of Financial Commissioner for Railways and an I. C. S. pool Officer has been appointed to the resultant vacancy.

ISSUE OF UPPER CLASS TICKETS ON THE MURSHIDABAD-LALGOLA SECTION OF THE B. & A. RAILWAY AND THE BOOKING OF SPECIAL TRAINS ON THAT SECTION.

26. THE HONOURABLE KUMAR N. N. SINHA: (*a*) Will Government lay on the table a statement showing separately the number of upper class tickets

* For answer to this question, *see* answer to question No. 21.

issued and collected at each station of the Murshidabad-Lalgola section of Bengal & Assam Railway for the last 3 years ending the 31st August, 1943 ?

(*b*) Has there been any special train of private persons booked or received at any of the stations of the above-mentioned section in the course of the last four years ; if so, at what station and on how many occasions.

THE HONOURABLE SIR SATYENDRA NATH ROY : (*a*) and (*b*) The collection and compilation of separate figures for the past three years would involve more time and labour than is justified.

I have therefore called for information relating to the period 1st January 1943 to the 31st August 1943, and will lay this on the table, together with a reply to part (*b*), when received.

STATEMENT ETC., LAID ON THE TABLE.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : Sir, I lay on the table copies of Notification issued by the Chief Commissioner, British Baluchistan, No. 1525/35-40/M. V., dated the 24th July, 1943, amending the British Baluchistan Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF BRITISH BALUCHISTAN.

NOTIFICATION.

Quetta, the 24th July 1943.

No. 1525/35-40/M. V.—In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 21 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939 (VI of 1939), the Chief Commissioner of British Baluchistan is pleased to direct that the following amendments shall be made to the British Baluchistan Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940, published in the Notification No. 347/M. V., dated the 1st April, 1940, printed at pages 841 to 982 of the Gazette of India, part II-A, dated the 27th April, 1940 :—

1. After Rule 2/4 (*c*) the following shall be added :—

" (*d*) No fee shall be charged for the test if the applicant satisfies the licensing Authority that he previously held a license granted or renewed under any provision of law which was in force in British India at the time it was granted or last renewed, to drive a vehicle of the class to which the application refers and was prevented, by reason of absence out of India on service connected with the present war, from obtaining or renewing a license in accordance with the provisions of the Act, on the expiry of the previous license.".

2. After Rule 2/19 add the following as Rule 2·20. :—

" 2·20. A refund of Rs. 2 out of the license fee of Rs. 5 shall be granted if the applicant satisfies the Licensing Authority that he previously held a license granted or renewed under any provision of law which was in force in British India at the time it was granted or last renewed and was prevented, by reason of absence out of India on service connected with the present war, from obtaining or renewing a license in accordance with the Act, on the expiry of the previous license.

By order,
H. D. RUSHTON,
Secretary to the Agent to the Governor General in Baluchistan

INFORMATION PROMISED IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS LAID ON THE TABLE.

THE HONOURABLE SIR SATYENDRA NATH ROY : Sir, I lay on the table the information promised in reply to parts *a* (*b*) and *a* (*c*) of Question No. 121, asked on the 10th August, 1943.

WAGON ALLOTMENT FOR WAR SUPPLIES, ETC.

	Number of wagons allotted from the Bengal and Bihar coal fields.	
	January—June 1943.	January—June 1942.
Loco Coal	192,952	182,677
*Coal for domestic consumption and small industries not directly engaged in war work	20,285*	57,352*

*No separate figures are available for coal for domestic consumption.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : Sir, I lay on the table the information promised in reply to parts (*c*) and (*d*) of Question No. 12, asked on the 2nd August, 1943.

SUGAR FACTORIES IN NORTH BIHAR, ETC.

No orders have been issued either by the Bombay and Bihar Governments or by the District Magistrates concerned to any mill outside Belapur, Narkatiaganj and Motihari to supply sugar to these places.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: Sir, I lay on the table the information promised in reply to Question No. 154, asked on the 31st August, 1943.

SUPPLY DEPARTMENT.

Yes. In all 662 applications were received; candidates were interviewed by the Selection Committee, of whom 4 were considered suitable for employment. Meanwhile certain changes in the organisation of the directorate were considered essential. These changes rendered the proposed appointments unnecessary. The inconvenience caused to the applicants and particularly to those interviewed is regretted.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: Sir, I lay on the table—

(i) the information promised in reply to supplementaries to Question No. 22, asked on the 2nd August, 1943;

(ii) copies of the Declaration of Exemption under Section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, as published with the Notifications of the Government of India in the Home Department—

(1) No. 1/33/43-Political (E.), dated the 4th August, 1943;
(2) No. 1/37/43-Political (E.), dated the 25th August, 1943;
(3) No. 1/36/43-Political (E.), dated the 2nd September, 1943;
(4) No. 1/38/43-Political (E.), dated the 3rd September 1943;
(5) No. 1/40/43-Political (E.), dated the 21st September, 1943;
(6) No. 6577-S/43-Political (E.), dated the 3rd October, 1943;
(7) No. 1/43/43-Political (E.), dated the 12th October, 1943;
(8) No. 1/44/43-Political (E.), dated the 12th October, 1943;
(9) No. 1/47/43-Political (E.), dated the 19th October, 1943;
(10) No. 1/48/43-Political (E.), dated the 22nd October, 1943;
(11) No. 1/50/43-Political (E.), dated the 29th October, 1943.

(iii) Copies of the Home Department Notification No. 1/30/43-Political (E.), dated the 20th September, 1943, further amending the Declarations published with the Notification of the Government of India in the Home Department No. 1/30/43-Political (E.), dated the 7th July, 1943.

NUMBERS OF SOUTH AFRICANS AND AUSTRALIANS IN THE CIVIL AND MILITARY SERVICES.

There is no Australian or South African in the Indian Civil Service with the exception of one officer of the Bombay-Sind joint cadre, whose precise domicile is however, not clear. This officer was born at Port Elisabeth Cape Colony, South Africa, but his father was born in England and he himself was educated there.

No. 1/33/43-POLITICAL (E.).
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.
Simla, the 4th August 1943.
DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to, the following United States Senators who are on a visit to India:—

Messrs. Henry Cabot Lodge, A. B. Chandler, Richard B. Russell, Ralph O. Brewster, and James M. Mead.

B. L. PANDEY,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 1/37/43-POLITICAL (E.).
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.
Simla, the 25th August 1943.
DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the

Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to or in relation to—

(1) Dr. Carl Coutelle.
(2) Dr. Herbert Baer.
(3) Dr. Walter Freudmann.
(4) Dr. David Yanco.
(5) Dr. Frederich Kisch.
(6) Dr. Eric Mamlock.
(7) Dr. Victor Taubenfligel.
(8) Dr. Franz Kriegel.
(9) Dr. Samuel Moise Flato, and
(10) Dr. Alexander Volokhina,

now serving as medical officers under the United States Armed Forces in India so long as they remain in their present posts.

B. L. PANDEY,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 1/36/43-POLITICAL (E.).

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

HOME DEPARTMENT.

Simla, the 2nd September 1943.

DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to,

1. Mr. John Fischer, special assistant to the Personal Representative of the President of the U. S. A.;
2. Mr. Eric Beecroft, special assistant to Mr. Fischer;
3. Mr. Chico Henry Schneider, Chief Mining Specialist of U. S. A. at Calcutta;
4. Mr. Paul Block, U. S. Office of War Information; and
5. Mr. McCune, Principal Procurement Officer of U. S. A. in India.

so long as they remain in their present posts.

B. L. PANDEY,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 1/38/43-POLITICAL (E.).

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

HOME DEPARTMENT.

Simla, the 3rd September 1943.

DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except Rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation, to passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to, Mr. Thomas Jefferson Davis, a member of the United States Lend-Lease Mission to India, so long as he remains in his present post.

B. L. PANDEY,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 1/40/43-POLITICAL (E.).

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

HOME DEPARTMENT.

Simla, the 21st October 1943.

DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to,

(1) Mr. Edward Harold Sweeney, Superintendent Engineer for the United States War Shipping Administration at Bombay,
(2) Messrs. David W. Graham and Theodore Frutkoff, employees of the United States office of War Information at New Delhi,
(3) Mr. Sheldon T. Mills, Secretary to the American Mission at New Delhi, and
(4) Mr. Tell Carrol Schreiber, Assistant Representative of the Overseas Operations Branch of the United States Office of War Information at New Delhi,

so long as they remain employed in their present posts.

B. L. PANDEY,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 6577-S/43-POLITICAL (E.).
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.
Simla, the 3rd October, 1943.
DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to :—

1. Dr. Soong, the Chinese Foreign Minister.
2. Mr. T. A. Soong.
3. Brigadier General Tsai.
4. Five officials of the party of Dr. Soong.
5. A valet.

B. L. PANDEY,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 1/43/43-POLITICAL (E.).
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.
Simla, the 12th October ,1943.
DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to, Messrs. Francis B. Rogers and Victor C. Rankin, Assistant Representatives of the Overseas Operations Branch of the United States Office of War Information so long as they remain employed in their present posts.

B. L. PANDEY,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 1/44/43-POLITICAL (E.).
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.
Simla, the 12th October, 1943.
DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners shall not apply to, or in relation to, Mr. Harold Mrazek, Assistant Representative of the United States Office of War Information, so long as he remains in that post.

B. L. PANDEY,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 1/47/43-POLITICAL (E.).
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.
Simla, the 19th October, 1943.
DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners shall not apply to, or in relation to, Mr. Minard Hamilton, Representative of the United States Office of Economic Warfare for so long as he remains in that post.

A. W. LOVATT,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 1/48/43-POLITICAL (E.).
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.
Simla, the 22nd October, 1943.
DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to, Mr. James Daniels, a member of the staff of the U. S. Office of War Information, for so long as he remains in that post.

A. W. LOVATT,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 1/50/43-POLITICAL (E.).

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

HOME DEPARTMENT.

Simla, the 29th October, 1943.

DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to, Mr. George W. Small, clerk at the United States Consulate at Karachi, for so long as he remains in that post.

A. W. LOVATT,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 1/30/43/POLITICAL (E.).

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

HOME DEPARTMENT.

New Delhi, the 20th September, 1943.

NOTIFICATION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to direct that the following further amendment shall be made in the Declarations published with the Notification of the Government of India in the Home Department No. 1/30/43-Political (E.), dated the 7th July 1943, namely :—

In clause (*i*), after the words " issued by ", the words " or on behalf of " shall be inserted.

H. J. FRAMPTON,
Joint Secretary to the Government of India.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES : Sir, I lay on the table copies * of :—

(1) Appropriation Accounts (Civil), 1941-42 and Audit Report, 1943.
(2) Commercial Appendix to above.
(3) Finance Accounts 1941-42, and Audit Report, 1943.
(4) Appropriation Accounts (Railways), 1941-42, Parts I and II.
(5) Capital Statements, Balance sheets of State Railways, 1941-42.
(6) Balance sheets of Railway collieries and statements of all in costs of coal, 1941-42.
(7) Railway Audit Report, 1943.
(8) Appropriation Accounts (Defence Services), 1941-42.
(9) Commercial Appendix to above.
(10) Audit Report, Defence Services, 1943.
(11) Appropriation Accounts (P. & T.), 1941-42, and Audit Report, 1942.
(12) Corrections to Appropriation Accounts (Civil) 1941-42 and Audit Report, 1943.
(13) Corrections to Railway Audit Report, 1943.
(14) Correction to Commercial Appendix to the Appropriation Accounts (Civil), 1941-42 and the Audit Report, 1943.
(15) Corrections to Appropriation Accounts (Railways), 1941-42.
(16) Corrections to the Capital Statements, etc. of State Railways for 1941-42.

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Honourable Members, I have a message to deliver from His Excellency the Governor General. The message is as follows :—

" *ORDER.*

In pursuance of the provisions of sub-section (2) of section 63A of the Government of India Act, as set out in the Ninth Schedule to the Government of India Act, 1935, I, Victor Alexander John, Marquess of Linlithgow, hereby nominate the following Members of the Council of State to be on the Panel of Chairmen of the said Council of State :—

In the first place, the Honourable Sir David Devadoss ; in the second place, the Honourable Mr. Maneckji Nadirshaw Dalal ; in the third place, the Honourable Sir Rahimtoola Chinoy ; and lastly the Honourable Mr. V. V. Kalikar.

NEW DELHI,
The 17th October, 1943.

LINLITHGOW,
Viceroy and Governor General."

*Not printed in these debates. Copies placed in the Library of the House.

COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Under Standing Order 76 of the Council of State Standing Orders, I am required at the commencement of each session to constitute a Committee on Petition consisting of the Chairman and four members The following members have at my request kindly consented to preside over and serve on the Committee. I accordingly have much pleasure in nominating as Chairman of the Committee the Honourable Raja Charanjit Singh and as members, the Honourable Pandit H. N. Kunzru, the Honourable Sir K. Ramunni Menon, the Honourable Haji Syed Muhammad Hussain and the Honourable Mr. Maneckji Nadirshaw Dalal.

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S ASSENT TO BILLS.

SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL: Sir, information has been received that His Excellency the Governor General has been pleased to grant his assent to the following Bills which were passed by the Chambers of the Indian Legislature during the Monsoon session, 1943, namely:—

(1) The Indian Boilers (Amendment) Act, 1943.
(2) The Mines Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 1943.
(3) The Motor Vehicles (Drivers) Amendment Act, 1943.
(4) The Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Amendment Act, 1943.
(5) The Indian Army and Indian Air Force (Amendment) Act, 1943.
(6) The Reciprocity (Amendment) Act, 1943.
(7) The War Injuries (Compensation Insurance) Act, 1943.
(8) The Delhi University (Amendment) Act, 1943.

BILLS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY LAID ON THE TABLE.

SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL: Sir, in pursuance of rule 25 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I lay on the table copies of the following Bills which were passed by the Legislative Assembly at its meeting held on the 13th November, 1943, namely:—

A Bill further to amend the Victoria Memorial Act, 1903.

A Bill further to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898. (Second Amendment).

A Bill to make certain provision for appeals in criminal cases tried by a High Court exercising criminal jurisdiction.

A Bill further to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE BILL TO AMEND AND CODIFY THE HINDU LAW RELATING TO INTESTATE SUCCESSION.

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. A. LAL (Nominated Official): Sir, I lay on the table the Report of the Joint Committee on the Bill to amend and codify the Hindu Law relating to intestate succession.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN (Leader of the House): Sir, as Honourable Members are aware, we meet on Wednesday the 17th for the transaction of non-official business. I suggest, Sir, if it is agreeable to you and to Honourable Members, that we meet on Thursday the 18th and Friday the 19th to discuss the food situation.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I think that is a very opportune time. I presume that that will be convenient to Honourable Members and that there will be no objection.

(*Honourable Members*: "Quite convenient").

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, the 17th November, 1943.

COUNCIL OF STATE

Wednesday, 17th November, 1943

The Council met in the Council Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

MEMBER SWORN.

Sir Rahimtoola Chinoy (Nominated Non-official).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

EXPORT OF TEXTILE AND OTHER PIECE-GOODS TO TURKEY.

27. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Is it a fact that textile goods which Turkey formerly bought from Britain, she is now buying from India; and about 500 tons of cotton yarn have already been shipped from India, and there were about 1,750 tons of piece-goods to be bought, upto the middle of August last?

(*b*) Is it a fact that about 6,000 tons of jute purchases were awaiting shipment from India about the middle of August last?

(*c*) What are the facts with regard to (*a*) and (*b*) above; and do Government propose to stop textile and other goods, which are urgently needed in India, to be shipped outside the country?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: (*a*) A quota of 2,250 tons of piece-goods and 1,300 tons of yarn has been fixed for export to Turkey during 1943. Part of this quantity has been purchased and shipped. The bulk of Turkey's pre-war supplies was drawn from continental Europe.

(*b*) The Government of India have agreed to the export of 6,000 tons of jute goods to Turkey during the year 1943. The quantity awaiting shipment in August last was 1,643 tons.

(*c*) For the reasons stated in my speech on the cotton piece-goods position on the 2nd March, 1943, it is not proposed to prohibit the export of cotton piece-goods, though the scale of exports has been severely reduced. In the case of these and similar goods export quotas are fixed after a careful consideration of the internal supply position and other relevant factors.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Could the Honourable Member give the figures of the actual export last year?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: To what destination?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: To Turkey.

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: I am afraid I am not in possession of the precise figure.

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN FOR WORK IN UNDERGROUND MINES.

28. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Is it a fact that the International Labour Conference of 1934 unanimously recommended an international convention prohibiting women from being employed in under-ground work in mines; and that the European workers' delegates declared at that Conference that it was inhuman to engage women for such work?

(*b*) Is it a fact that the Government of India approved of, and adopted the Convention, and introduced legislation for the gradual abolition of women labour inside the mines?

(*c*) Is it a fact that this Convention has been for sometime abrogated, and women in India are employed inside the mines? If so, why?

(*d*) Are Government aware that due to War conditions, the increasing scarcity of food-grains and their soaring prices, have caused the vitality of the poor people to deteriorate; and women, under present conditions, are exceptionally unfit to bear the serious strain of such under-ground labour?

Do Government propose to take steps to prohibit women from being employed on under-ground work?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: (*a*) The Convention referred to by the Honourable Member was adopted unanimously by the International Labour Conference of 1935, and not 1934 as referred to by him. As regards the speech of a

workers' delegate I presume the Honourable Member is referring to the speech of the Workers' Adviser, British Empire, the purport of which was as the Honourable Member has stated.

(*b*) Provision already existed in Section 29 of the Indian Mines Act, 1923, enabling regulations to be made prohibiting, among other matters, the employment of women in mines, below ground. Regulations were accordingly made in this respect, which took effect from 1st October, 1937.

(*c*) No. Women have been allowed to be employed in underground workings in coal mines in the Central Provinces since 2nd August, 1943, and in Berar since 18th August, 1943. The restrictions on the employment of women underground were removed temporarily because the shortage of labour in the Central Provinces and Berar coalfields was affecting the output of coal and seriously impeding the war effort.

(*d*) Government are not aware that scarcity of foodgrains and high prices have caused noticeable mal-nutrition in the Central Provinces and Berar coal fields areas. They do not consider that women in the Central Provinces and Berar are exceptionally unfit to bear the strain of underground labour. Women are not employed underground in coal cutting but in loading coal. Government regret that no such immediate action as the Honourable Member proposes in the last part of the question can be taken by Government.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Is the health and the welfare of women a matter of no consequence so far as the war effort is concerned ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Does that arise out of the question ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : It arises out of the question in this way. The convention was adopted on the basis that work in mines affects the health of women. The convention has been abrogated. My question is is the health of women no concern of the Indian Government ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I quite understand your supplementary question ? But did you hear what Mr. Prior said last ? He said that women are only employed in the mines on loading work and no other work. Do you think that loading work endangers health in any way ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Would you like women of the upper classes to do loading work ? If you would not like it, I say it is not good for women of the working classes to do that kind of work.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : There are two objections to your question, Mr. Sapru. The first is that this question does not arise. You are at liberty to put any number of questions about welfare of women after giving notice. My principal objection is that it does not arise out of the question.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : You answer for Mr. Prior. If you had said that the question does not arise out of Mr. Prior's answer, I would have accepted your ruling, but you are acting as the spokesman of Mr. Prior.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : As an old member you ought to know that the President has to decide about the admissibility of questions and not Mr. Prior or any other member.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Has the Government of the United Kingdom removed this convention and allowed women to work underground ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR : So far as I know, no, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Are we harder pressed for manpower than the United Kingdom Government ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR : In the coal mines we are at the moment.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Was any effort made by the Government of the Central Provinces to get workers from outside ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR : I think not.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Will the Government of India ask them to make that attempt ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR : We are already considering that.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Have Government in the meanwhile taken any special steps to protect the health and welfare of the women ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR : We had sent a Labour Welfare Officer to examine the conditions of work in the mines and have only just now received his report.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Have any maternity wards been opened in the coalfields ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR : So far as we know, not underground.

EXTENSION OF THE JURISDICTION OF FEDERAL COURT.

29. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Will Government state whether there is any proposal for the extension of the Federal Court's jurisdiction ; and if so, in what direction? Will Government give an outline of the proposal ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. A. LAL : The question is under correspondence with the Secretary of State and I regret, I am not in a position to make any further statement at this stage.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : In what directions are their powers to be increased ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. S. A. LAL : I have nothing to add to my answer.

DISABILITIES OF INDIANS IN CANADA.

30. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Are Government aware that, in the words of Sir Robert Holland, Indians in Canada " are subjected to disabilities, which tend to make them out-castes, apart from the specific disqualifications. Nevertheless, they have to pay taxes to the Dominion, and Provincial Governments ", and " that in Canada British Asiatics are in more helpless position than aliens of Asiatic or other origin " ? (*Hindustan Times*, dated 27th August, 1943). Will Government enumerate the disabilities and disqualifications of Indians in Canada ; and the steps taken to redress them ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN : The Government of India have seen the Press Report referred to by the Honourable Member regarding the disabilities of Indians in Canada. It is in one province of Canada, *viz.*, British Columbia that Indians suffer from certain disabilities arising mainly out of the denial of franchise rights to them. The Government of India have already made suitable representations on the question of conferring such rights on Indians domiciled in British Columbia.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : When were these representations last made ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN : The last communication Sir, was about two months ago.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Has any reply been received from the Dominion ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN : Not yet, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Did the Government of India make these representations direct to the Dominion Government or through the British Government ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN : Through the British Government.

ESCAPE OF SECURITY PRISONER REVATI RANJAN CHAKRAVARTY FROM RED FORT, DELHI.

31. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Is it a fact that a security prisoner, Revati Ranjan Chakravarty, who was confined in the Red Fort, Delhi, escaped from confinement ? If so, what are the facts ? For what offence was he confined, and how long was he under detention ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : The Honourable Member is doubtless referring to a prisoner named Rohini Ranjan Chakrabartti who recently escaped from confinement in the Red Fort, Delhi, but who has since been recaptured. Rohini Ranjan Chakrabartti is detained for military reasons which it would not be in the public interest to disclose and I am not prepared to give any further details of his case.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : How long has he been a security prisoner ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : I am afraid I cannot give the Honourable Member the information.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Have Government made any enquiries into the methods of his escape and punished those who were responsible for the escape ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : I have already stated that I regret I am not prepared to give any more information about this case.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I am not asking any information about the prisoner. I am asking for information about the Warders, whether those who were responsible for keeping him in detention have been suitably dealt with.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : I shall have to ask for notice of that question.

APPOINTMENT OF MAJOR-GENERAL GEORGE E. STRATEMEYER AS THEATRE AIR OFFICER IN INDIA, BURMA AND CHINA.

32. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Is it a fact that one Maj.-Gen. George E. Stratemeyer, who arrived in India sometimes back has been appointed " Theatre Air Officer in India, Burma, and China " ? What are the duties of this post ? What is his salary and how much of it will be borne by India ?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF : Major General Stratemeyer has been appointed Commanding General of the Army Air Forces, India-Burma Sector of the China-India-Burma Theatre. As regards his duties, he is the Commanding General of all United States Army Air Force units in India and is Air Adviser to the Commanding General of the United States Army Forces in the China-Burma-India Theatre.

His salary is fixed by the United States Government and is paid entirely by that Government.

PRICE OF AND MANUFACTURE OF XE LOCOMOTIVES.

33. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Is it a fact that the price paid in 1930-31 for XE locomotives in service on the East Indian Railway was Rs. 1,34,110 each, the contract price fixed for each XE locomotive ordered in the United Kingdom in 1939-40, was Rs. 1,86,882 which was cancelled later on ; and the contract price for each XE locomotive now to be supplied by the United States of America is estimated to cost Rs. 3,00,000 ? How many locomotives have been contracted to be supplied by the U. S. A. to this country, and why is the price of the locomotive so much higher than in previous years ? Are such locomotives not manufactured in this country ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR SATYENDRA NATH ROY : The figures quoted by the Honourable Member of the prices paid for XE locomotives in use on the East Indian Railway and contracted for supply from the United Kingdom in 1939-40 are correct.

The number of XE locomotives to be obtained from the United States of America is 40 and these will be supplied under Lease-Lend arrangements.

Locomotives of the XE type are not manufactured in India.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Have the Government of India made any attempts to manufacture locomotives during the war in India ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR SATYENDRA NATH ROY : I understand, Sir, that some broad gauge locomotives are being built in Ajmer but they are of the smallest type.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : What is the number of locomotives of the broad gauge type that are being built there ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR SATYENDRA NATH ROY : I regret I have not got that information here.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Has any attempt been made by the Government of India to get the necessary machinery from the United States and other places in order to be able to start locomotive construction in this country ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR SATYENDRA NATH ROY : To the best of my knowledge that matter is under correspondence at the present time.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Has it been under correspondence since the publication of the Locomotive Construction Committee Report ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR SATYENDRA NATH ROY : No, Sir, since the statement made by the Honourable Member for War Transport, I think, in the Budget debate.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : What is the situation now ? I mean to say, may we reasonably expect to get the machinery asked for ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR SATYENDRA NATH ROY : I must have notice of that question.

AIR SERVICE BETWEEN FLORIDA TO CHUNGKING *via* THE SOUTH ATLANTIC, AFRICA AND INDIA.

34. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Is it a fact that an air service between Florida to Chungking, *via* the South Atlantic, Africa and India—a journey of about 17,000 miles is operated by the United States Army Air Transport Command ? If so, will Government give the main details of this service, and the facilities afforded to India, and its financial implications, or other obligations imposed ?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF : The air service in question is operated solely by the United States Air Transport Command and is exclusively a military one for service personnel and service freight. For security reasons details of the running of the service cannot be given. No financial or other obligation is imposed on India in connection with the running of this service.

MEETING OF THE CANTONMENT BOARD, AMBALA, IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESIDENT.

35. THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR : Will Government state whether it is a fact that—

(*a*) during the station leave of Brigadier A. P. Churchill, President, Cantonment Board, Ambala, Lieut.-Col. J. G. I. Keys, officiating Station Commander, Ambala, presided at the Ambala Cantonment Board meeting held on 30th July, 1943 ;

(*b*) the elected members protested against this and staged a walk-out ;

(*c*) after this walk-out, the officiating Station Commander adjourned the meeting to the next day at 10-30 A.M. ; and

(*d*) the Officiating Station Commander did the act mentioned in (*c*) without taking any oath ?

THE HONOURABLE MALIK SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON : (*a*) Brigadier A. P. Churchill was not on station leave but on war leave and during his absence Lt.-Col. J. G. I. Keys was appointed Station Commander, Ambala, and as such he presided at the Ambala Cantonment Board meeting held on the 30th July 1943.

(*b*), (*c*) and (*d*) Government is aware that six of the seven elected members acted at first as stated by the Honourable Member. After it was explained to them that Brigadier Churchill being on war leave Lt.-Col. Keys was at that time the Officer Commanding the Station and as such became *ipso facto* the President of the Cantonment Board under section 20 (*1*) read with section 13 (*3*) (*a*) of the Cantonments Act, 1924, they returned to the Board Room and resumed their seats. Lt.-Col. Keys then took the oath while the Vice-President L. Kishan Chand was in the Chair. The Vice-President then vacated the Chair for the President and the latter thereafter presided at the meeting.

PERFORMANCE OF THE DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE PRESIDENT, CANTONMENT BOARD, AMBALA.

36. THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR : (*a*) Will Government state whether it is a fact that ever since the absence of the President, Cantonment Board referred to in the preceding question the Officiating Station Commander exercised all the powers and assumed all the functions of the President to the entire exclusion of the Vice-President ?

(*b*) If so, is it in consonance with the provisions of Sections 20 and 23 of the Cantonments Act which lay down respectively that the military officer holding the office of the President shall not vacate it merely by reasons of his temporary absence from the station on station leave and that the Vice-President shall perform all the duties of the President in his absence ?

THE HONOURABLE MALIK SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON : (*a*) Under section 20 (*1*) of the Cantonments Act, 1924, it is only when the President is absent from the station in a temporary capacity either on duty or on station leave or during the transfer of his headquarters to a hill station that he does not vacate the office of President and the Vice-President, under section 23 of the Act, carries on in his absence. As stated in reply to parts (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*) of question No. 35, Lt.-Col. Keys was the President of the Cantonment Board, while Brigadier Churchill was on war leave, he was competent to act as such subject to any delegations previously made by the latter officer to the Vice-President under sub-section (*2*) of section 22 of the Act.

(*b*) Does not arise.

CORRECT RECORDING OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMBALA CANTONMENT BOARD.

37. THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR : If the answers to the preceding two questions be in the affirmative, will Government state whether these facts are truly recorded in the Ambala Cantonment Board's Proceedings? If not, why not ?

THE HONOURABLE MALIK SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON : No. The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to my answer to parts (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*) of question No. 35.

SUPPLY MEMBER'S OPINION ON THE "FOUR FREEDOMS" IN THE B. B. C.'s DISCUSSION.

38. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Did the opinions expressed by the Honourable the Supply Member in the B. B. C.'s discussion of four freedoms on 1st November at 9-45 P.M. reflect the opinion of the Government of India ; if not, what are the Government's decisions on the questions raised by Lord Hailey ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : The reply to the first part of the Honourable Member's question is in the negative. As regards the second part no "decisions" by Government are called for.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Am I to understand that Members of the Governor-General's Executive Council can express opinions on political matters which are entirely their own ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : We can certainly express our personal opinions.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Is it a fact that this discussion was recorded before he assumed charge of the portfolio of Supply ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : As far as I remember, it was after he assumed charge of his portfolio.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : What was his position before he became Supply Member ? He was a Member of the Government of India ; was he not ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : Yes.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Therefore, is it a fact that it was open to some Members of the Government of India to advocate Pakistan, for others to say that there shall be no freedom, and for others to say that there shall be complete independence ? Is that the position ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : I think they can express their personal opinions.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Would it be open to a Member of the Government of India to say "Quit India" ? I understand the Honourable the Leader of the House to say that they can express their personal opinions. Would it be open to a Member of the Government of India to say to his colleagues "Quit India" ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : No, because he has taken the oath of allegiance to His Majesty the King-Emperor.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : That does not involve the oath of allegiance.

PAYMENTS TO PROVINCES IN CONNECTION WITH "GROW MORE FOOD" CAMPAIGN.

39. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will Government lay on the table a statement of the amounts given to each province under the Grow More Food campaign and the specific scheme for which given, specifying the amounts of free gifts and loans, separately?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: A statement showing the loans and grants sanctioned by the Government of India to Provincial Governments during the current financial year for "Grow More Food Campaign" schemes is laid on the table of the House. In addition grants totalling Rs. 28,83,721 were made from the Cotton Fund to Provinces and States for diverting short staple cotton to food crops during 1942-43.

Statement showing loans and grants sanctioned by the Government of India to Provincial and States Governments during 1943-44 for Grow more Food Schemes.

Name of Province or State and schemes sanctioned.	Loans Rs.	Grants from Central Revenues.	Grant from Cotton Fund.
1. *Madras*—			
(1) Paddy seed multiplication scheme in Vizagapatam Chingleput, Guntur and Chittor Districts .	..	53,300	
(2) Meeting half the cost of the permanent advance to the Director of Agriculture, Madras for financing supply of manures to Cultivators .	5,00,000		
(3) Distribution of paddy seeds to the Cultivators .	14,00,000		
(4) Free distribution of manures to poor deserving ryots	..	24,000	
(5) Grant of loans to actual Cultivators at Rs. 2 per acre for the reduction of cotton cultivation .	..		1,46,666
(6) Incidental expenses and overhead charges of the scheme for the distribution of paddy seeds, to the cultivators [Scheme (3) above]	..	1,55,400	
(7) Annual overhead charges (except transport charges) of the scheme 2 above for the purchase of groundnuts cake and fishguano for sale to ryots as manure and losses which may be incurred by the sale of this manure . .	Amount not yet known.		
	19,00,000	2,32,700	1,46,666
2. *Bombay*—			
(1) Interest free taccavi advances repayable in 3 years for the cultivation of cultivable waste lands .	3,00,000	1,00,000	..
(2) Scheme for the distribution of improved seeds of rice, wheat, *jowar* and gram and ordinary seeds of *bajra*	..	93,166	1,28,333
(3) Supply of manures at concession rates to cultivators provided the Central Governments share does not exceed Rs. 20 per ton (no manure will be transported from outside the province. C. R. P. will be consulted for rail movements) .	..	2,00,000	..
(4) Supply of 200 tons of bone-meal manure to cultivators in Kanara District at concession rates for manuring paddy lands	..	1,927	..
(5) Cash rewards to cultivators of cotton tracts for growing food crops in place of short staple cotton	..	..	58,000
(6) Grant to the Provincial Government as 80 per cent of the loss sustained by them on supply of food crop seeds at concession rates . . .	..	..	1,52,000
	3,00,000	3,95,093	3,38,333

Name of Province or State and schemes sanctioned.	Loans Rs.	Grants from Central Revenues.	Grant from Cotton Fund.
3. *Bengal*—			
(1) Distribution of 3 lakh maunds of *Amon* paddy seeds for lands newly BROUGHT UNDER cultivation and for areas affected by natural calamities last year	33,25,000	5,26,000	
(2) Additional staff for the intensification of food production drive	..	76,000	
(3) Emergency Irrigation projects (6 schemes)	..	1,25,752	
(4) Purchase of 50,000 maunds of wheat seed for distribution to cultivators	4,50,000	2,25,000	
(5) Purchase and distribution of 42,000 maunds of gram, lentil, and mustard seeds for *rabi* season	4,34,000	..	
(6) Purchase of 1 lakh maunds of potato seeds and 75,000 maunds of oil cakes for distribution to growers.	14,00,000	1,78,500	
(7) Substitute crops in flood affected areas in the Province to encourage the growing of *rabi* crops in place of rice by purchase and distribution of 56,400 maunds of seeds	6,06,000	70,000	
(8) Irrigation by Persian wheels—wheat and potato crops		16,000	
(9) Drainage schemes in furtherance of the "Grow More Food Campaign" in the Districts of Bakarganj, Mymensingh, Nadia, Bogra and Khulna		96,800	
	62,15,000	13,14,052	
4. *United Provinces*—			
(1) Distribution of oil cakes (1 lakh maund) to cultivators covering 20,000 acres of paddy	..	1,00,000	..
(2) Emergency Irrigation Projects	..	7,50,000	..
(3) Compost making and preservation of Urine earth	..	25,000	..
(4) Opening of 20 new seed stores in the backward state—Tubewell areas		17,500	
(5) Opening of 84 new seed stores for the multiplication and distribution of improved paddy seeds and the stocking of pedigree seeds for rennovating the seed stocks in the existing seed stores		42,000	
		9,34,500	
5. *Punjab*—			
(1) Reclamation of 50,000 acres of 'Sailab' (riverain) lands for cultivation of wheat, gram and Barley	..	3,00,000	
6. *Central Provinces and Berar*—			
(1) Scheme relating to the sinking of wells	25,00,000	1,00,000	4,00,000
(2) Construction of field embankments for converting single crop areas into *do-fasli*-areas	2,00,000	1,00,000	..
(3) Free distribution of gram seed for newly broken lands	..	1,25,000	1,25,000
(4) Free distribution of sann-hemp seed for green manuring 20,000 acres of land most of which should go under wheat	..	70,000	
(5) Purchase and distribution of oil cake manure (10,000 tons) for 54,000 acres on condition that these oil cakes will be used for manuring rice crop only	7,50,000	4,00,000	
(6) Additional staff for the intensification of the food production drive	..	50,000	
(7) Muramnala Irrigation scheme	..	3,25,000	
(8) Extension of Potato cultivation	..	12,500	
	34,50,000	11,82,500	5,25,000

Name of Province or State and schemes sanctioned.	Loans Rs.	Grants from Central Revenues.	Grant from Cotton Fund.
7. *Bihar*—			
(1) Distribution of Improved seeds of paddy and manure for 2 lakhs acres at concession rates	..	1,00,000	..
(2) Additional staff for the intensification of food production drive	..	15,652	..
(3) Six Ganges river side pumping sets	..	59,000	..
(4) 76 Standard 1¼ cusec tube-wells each with 3 miles channel, 1 mile long 11 K. V. line and transformers	..	4,41,000	..
(5) 12 river-bed percolation pumps energised by 2 mobile generating sets	..	73,000	..
(6) A 70 mile long 33 K. V. main electric feeder line from Patna Power station through Bakhtiarpur and Bihar to Ruanger Sarai	..	2,36,000	..
	..	9,24,652	..
8. *Assam*—			
(1) Scheme for the distribution of seeds and manures at concessional rates—			
(*a*) Paddy seeds	2,41,000	60,000	..
(*b*) Pulses	1,93,667	58,100	..
(*c*) Wheat and barley	52,500	21,000	..
(*d*) Oil Seeds	27,100	4,800	..
(*e*) Manures	37,500	13,417	..
(*f*) Potatoes	3,50,000	35,000	..
(*g*) Contingencies and storage (26 seed stores) for above items	..	17,500	..
(2) Emergency Irrigation—			
(*a*) Small projects	..	1,10,000	..
(*b*) Staff for minor Irrigation Projects	..	75,268	..
(*c*) Sale of 50 Persian wheels to cultivators at 50 per cent. of cost	...	7,500	..
	9,01,867	4,02,585	..
9. *Orissa*—			
(1) Reclamation of waste lands to the extent of 66,000 acres	3,76,500	38,400	..
(2) Scheme for increasing *do-fasli* areas to the extent of 39,000 acres	1,60,500	45,000	..
(3) Purchase and distribution of green manure seed free of cost for the paddy crops	..	6,750	..
(4) Provision of tendas for irrigation from existing wells for wheat and ragi crops	..	27,000	..
(5) Additional staff for the Intensification of food production drive	..	27,500	..
(6) Supply of 15,000 maunds of groundnut cake manure to cultivators at concession rate for manuring 5,000 acres of paddy lands in the canal irrigated tracts of the Province	40,300	22,500	..
	5,77,300	1,67,150	..
10. *Sind*—			
(1) Purchase of improved paddy seeds in *Kharif* 1944	..	2,00,000	..
(2) Raising of Rice seedlings in Karachi District	..	6,335	..
(3) Purchase and distribution of Millet seeds	..	55,000	..
		2,61,335	

Name of Province or State and schemes sanctioned.	Loans Rs.	Grants from Central Revenues.	Grants from Cotton Fund.
11. *Coorg*—			
(1) Grant of bonus to actual cultivators at Rs. 7-8 and Rs. 20 per acre for the cultivation of waste lands to the extent of 1,500 acres of dryland and 1,500 acres of wet land respectively . .	..	41,250	..
(2) Additional Staff for intensification of food production drive	..	7,200	..
		48,450	
12. *Ajmer-Merwara*—			
(1) Grant of bonus to actual cultivators at Rs. 2 per acre for diverting areas from short staple cotton to food crops	..	..	29,185
(2) Distribution of wheat gram and Barley seeds .	..	70,000	..
Grand Total . .	1,33,44,167	62,33,017	10,39,184

BENGAL GOVERNMENT'S PURCHASES OF FOODGRAINS.

40. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Is it a fact that the Bengal Government's purchases of foodgrains are still lying in the provinces under embargo ? Will Government lay on the table a full statement of the full amount bought by the Bengal Government in each province, the amount sent out by each province up to 30th September and the amount despatched in October out of this ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : Presumably the Honourable Member is referring to purchases during the free trade period in the Provinces of Bihar, Orissa, Assam and the Eastern States. Most of these purchases were by private merchants and not by Bengal Government itself. Under agreement reached between the Bengal Government and the other administrations these purchases, which were the subject of embargoes, have now been permitted to be released by the administrations concerned. Information is not available of the full amounts bought by the Bengal Government itself in each Province or the amounts despatched from other Provinces against such purchases upto either 30th of September, or in the month of October.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Do I take it that the Government has not asked for this information, or that it cannot be collected ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : We have not yet asked for this information.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Has the attention of the Government been drawn to the Bengal Government's protest against the embargo placed by the different Governments ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : The embargo in the case of Orissa has already been raised, as I have explained.

PRE-WAR IMPORT OF RICE, ETC., BY BENGAL.

41. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Will Government state the average annual pre-war net import of rice and paddy by sea and by rail by the Province of Bengal ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : The average annual pre-war net imports of rice and paddy by sea and rail into Bengal were as follows :—

Rice 25, 288 tons.

Paddy 56,659 tons.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : For what period is this average ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : Three years, from 1936-37.

SUPPLY OF RICE, PADDY, ETC., TO BENGAL FOR CIVIL AND DEFENCE FORCES.

42. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Will Government lay on the table a statement of the amount of rice and paddy and of other foodgrains separately sent to Bengal for Civil and Defence forces apart in each of the ten months of this year ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : A statement is placed on the table showing despatches of different foodgrains to Bengal for Civil consumption since January, 1943.

Information regarding foodgrains despatched to Bengal on account of the Defence Services during the same period is not readily available and I regret that I am not prepared to undertake its collection which does not appear to be justifiable.

Statement showing quantities of foodgrains despatched to Bengal during the period from January to October, 1943.

In Tons.

	Rice.	Wheat including Products.	Millets.	Gram.	Total.
January	725	576	..	..	1,301
February	4,761	2,690	141	..	7,592
March	5,157	5,668	557	..	11,382
April	18,924	17,871	7,146	2,156	46,097
May	26,821	7,334	1,118	311	35,584
June	17,766	22,367	19,203	..	50,336
July	(a)89,441	19,777	2,360	92	111,670
August	15,567	25,240	5,428	289	46,524
September	35,858	52,058	19,079	430	107,425
October upto 28th	28,358	21,497	10,246	3,478	63,579
Total		175,078	56,278		481,490
(b) Monthly break down not available for Wheat Products		44,544			44,544
Australian wheat (before April 1943)		11,066			11,066
Total	243,378	230,688	56,278	6,756	537,100

(a) Includes free trade despatches.
(b) Permits issued. Actual despatches up to 11th November, 1943, amount to 36,820 tons.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: May I appeal to the War Member to give us some information, if not full information, on the subject?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I do not think the Honourable Member is entitled to ask that question of the War Member now.

STOCK OF FOODGRAINS HELD AND BOUGHT BY THE MILITARY IN BENGAL, ASSAM AND BIHAR.

43. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: What was the amount of foodgrains held by the military in Bengal, Assam and Bihar, on 30th September, 1943, and the amount bought locally in Bengal, during the year 1943?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: The total tonnage of foodgrains held by the military in Bengal, Assam and Bihar on 30th September, 1943 was 28,574. As far as can be ascertained none of this was bought locally in Bengal.

QUANTUM AND VALUE OF TEXTILES BOUGHT BY THE SUPPLY DEPARTMENT FOR FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

44. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will Government lay on the table a statement of the quantum and value of textiles bought by the Supply Department for His Majesty's Government and China and other Governments for export outside India during the last six quarters?

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. S. A. HYDARI: I lay a statement on the table.

STATEMENT NO. 1.

(a) *Statement showing estimated quantities and values of Cotton Textiles purchased by the Government of India in the six quarters February 1942 to July 1943.*

	Quantity. (In millions.)	Approximate Value. (In lakhs of Rs.)
A. Bulk Purchase Items:		
(i) Piecegoods—		
Feb./April 1942 . . Yds.	256·660	11,74·00
May/July 1942 . . ,,	256·660	11,74·00
Aug./Oct. 1942 . . ,,	245·090	14,42·16
Nov./Jan. 1943 . . ,,	245·090	14,42·16
Feb./April 1943 . . ,,	178·089	15,78·65
May/July 1943 . . ,,	178·089	15,78·65

(b) *Quantities and values of cotton textiles arranged directly for export to "GROUP" and other Allied countries in the Panel Year February, 1942—January 1943.*

	Quantity. (In millions).	Approximate. Value. (In lakhs. of Rs.)
A. Piecegoods—		
(i) For Group countries, including H. M. G. . . Yds.	258·937	13,54·86
(ii) For China . . ,,	21·440	84·08
(iii) For Turkey . . ,,	40·310	1,37·30

	Quantity (In millions.)	Approximate Value. (In lakhs of Rs.)		Quantity. (In millions).	Approximate. Value. (In lakhs of Rs.)
A. Bulk Purchase Items—contd.					
(*ii*) Miscellaneous Items like Towels, Sheets, etc :—					
Feb./April 1942	...	57·12			
May/July 1942	...	57·12			
Aug./Oct. 1942	...	62·45			
Nov./Jan. 1943	...	62·45			
Feb./April 1943	...	49·55			
May/July 1943	...	49·55			
(*iii*) Cloth for Turkey—					
April/Sep. 1942 . . .	40·310	1,37·30			
B. Cotton Yarn, including Cordage for Tents, Hosiery, Webbing, etc. :—			*B. Yarn*—		
1942-43 . . .	lbs. 120·000	18,00·00 (estimate).	For China . . .	lbs. 4·800	42·52
			„ Turkey	2·240	14·30
			„ S. Africa	0·400	3·82
			„ Australia	2·400	18·13
			„ Syria .	0·234	1·22
			„ Mid.-East . . .	0·360	1·19
C. Non-Bulk Items—			*C. Non-Bulk Items*—		
May, 1942—July, 1943		6,22,24	For HMG (Cotton Waste)		16·09*

*May, 1942—July, 1943.

STATEMENT No. 2.

Textiles other than cotton Textiles.

Woollen and Jute Cloth	100,956,750 Yds.
Jute Bags	316,299,630
Woollen Blankets, etc.	199,670
Worsted Yarn	38,700 lbs.
Silk Yarn	595,000 lbs.

The total value of these articles is Rs. 8,62,82,000 approximately.

QUANTUM AND VALUE OF TEXTILES EXPORTED ON NON-GOVERNMENT ACCOUNT.

45. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Will Government state the quantum and value of textiles exported outside India on non-Government account in each of the last six quarters ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI : I lay on the table a statement showing the quantity and value of cotton piece-goods exported from British India by sea on non-Government account during each of the past six quarters ending with June, 1943.

Statement showing the quantity and value of Cotton Piecegoods exported from British India by Sea on non-Government Account during each of six quarters ending with June, 1943.

Quarter ending with	Quantity in thousand yards.	Value in rupees thousand.
March 1942	265,232	9,87,46
June 1942	276,223	10,39,32
September 1942	211,528	8,75,32
December 1942	182,673	9,55,19
March 1943	147,567	10,05,82
June 1943	131,776	9,84,45
Total .	1,214,999	58,47,56

PURCHASES OF TEXTILES BY THE SUPPLY DEPARTMENT.

46. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Will Government give an approximate estimate of purchases of textiles by the Supply Department during the year 1943-44 ? What proportion of this is for consumption of Indian Army, for foreign army in India and for export to foreign and empire countries ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. S. A. HYDARI : The value of purchases of Cotton Textiles by the Government of India during the year 1943-44 is about Rs. 72 crores and 21 lakhs ; of textiles other than cotton textiles, about 14 crores 43 lakhs. I am unable to give a break-up of the supplies under the different heads required.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Can the Honourable Member give us figures about exports out of India ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. S. A. HYDARI : They have been given by my Honourable colleague on my right (Mr. Pillai.).

ALLOTMENT OF LEND-LEASE LORRIES.

47. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will Government give a full statement of Lend-Lease lorries given to private individuals, firms and companies in each province up to 30th October and on what terms? How many are left over for disposal? What is the basis of this allotment?

THE HONOURABLE SIR SATYENDRA NATH ROY: The details asked for are not readily available. They are being obtained and a statement will be laid on the table in due course.

Lease Lend vehicles allocated for civil use are distributed by the War Transport Department to the Provinces on the basis of known or estimated essential requirements and are allotted by Provincial Motor Transport Controllers to Government Departments, firms or individuals in accordance with priority of demands, subject to the following conditions:—

(*i*) that the vehicle will be employed on war work or essential civil work connected with the war or to relieve conditions brought about by the war;

(*ii*) that the vehicle will be properly maintained and will not be overloaded or driven at excessive speed;

(*iii*) that producer gas plants will be fitted to it, if required to do so by Government;

(*iv*) that the vehicle will not be sold without the permission in writing of the Provincial Motor Transport Controller; and

(*v*) that the vehicle will be surrendered to Government at a valuation if demanded.

Out of 6,002 vehicles placed at the disposal of the War Transport Department up to the end of October only 27 had not been allocated by that Department on that date. Particulars of the numbers not allocated by Provincial Controllers will be given in the Statement I have promised to lay on the table.

GAZETTED APPOINTMENTS IN THE SUPPLY, INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND FOOD DEPARTMENTS.

48. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will Government lay on the table a statement of the new gazetted appointments made in the Supply Department, Information and Broadcasting Department and the Department of Food since 1st April to 30th October, 1943?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Statements giving the required information are laid on the table of the House.

Statement giving the information required in question No. 48 in the Council of State by the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam.

Serial No.	Name.	Designation.
	DEPARTMENT OF FOOD (SECRETARIAT).	
	Mr. R. H. Hutchings, C.M.G., C.I.E., I.C.S.	Secretary.
	Mr. W. H. Kirby	Rationing Adviser.
	Mr. N. T. Mone, I.C.S.	Deputy Secretary.
	Mr. S. M. Yusuf, I.C.S.	Under Secretary.
	Mr. S. R. Maini, P.C.S.	Under Secretary.
	Rai Bahadur D. N. Maitra	Assistant Secretary.
	Mr. I. J. Malhan, B.A.	Superintendent.
	Mr. A. A. Shah	Superintendent.
	DIRECTORATE GENERAL, FOOD.	
	Mr. R. B. Sen, I.C.S.	Director General of Food.
	Hon'ble Somerset Butler	Deputy Director General (Grains).
	Col. L. J. L. Addison, I.A.	Assistant Director General (Purchase).
	Mr. M. D. Apostolides	Officer-in-Charge, Karachi Foodgrains Reserve Depot.
	Mr. B. L. Sahney	Deputy Director.
	Mr. S. N. Sikand	Deputy Director.
	Dr. H. S. Bhai	Deputy Director.
	Mr. A. E. daCosta	Assistant Secretary and Amministrative Officer.
9	Mr. G. Chaudhary	Assistant Director.

Serial No.	Name.	Designation.
10	Mr. J. S. Narayana . .	Assistant Director of Purchase (Foodgrains).
11	Mr. I. U. Lakhia . .	Assistant Director (Grains)
12	Lt. M. G. Abhyankar .	Assistant Director (Grains).
13	Mr. D. D. Gupta . .	Deputy Assistant Director of Purchase (Military).
14	Mr. Brij Raj Kishore .	Deputy Assistant Director of Purchase (Military).
15	Mr. S. P. Joshi . .	Industrial Planning Officer.
16	Mr. T. M. Rama Aiyengar	Industrial Planning Officer.
17	Mr. Tazimul Haq . .	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer.
18	Mr. R. Parikshit . .	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer.
19	Mr. Bala Ram Dhawan .	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer.
20	Mr. Mohd. Sadiq . .	Asistant Industrial Planning Officer.
21	Mr. Jon Benedict Chitambar	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer.
22	Mr. Mohd Ikramullah .	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer.
23	Mr. A. N. Chaddah . .	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer.

SUGAR CONTROLLER FOR INDIA.

1	Mr. S. A. Iyengar, I.C.S.	Dy. Sugar Controller for India.
2	Mr. I. P. Mathur, M.A.	Inspector.
3	Mr. S. N. Gupta, M.A.	Inspector.

REGIONAL FOOD COMMISSIONERS.

1	Sir Colin Campbell Garbett, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., C.M.G.	Regional Food Commissioner, Punjab Region.
2	Mr. M. R. Ghulati	Deputy Regional Food Commissioner, Punjab Region.
3	Rai Bahadur Col. Dina Nath, C.I.E. . .	Regional Food Commissioner, U. P. Region.
4	Mr. P. K. Basu	Dy. Regional Food Commissioner, Eastern Region.
5	Dewan Bahadur C. P. Karunakara Menon .	Regional Food Commissioner, Madras Region.
6	Mr. J. B. Ross	Regional Food Commissioner, Bombay Region.
7	Khan Bahadur Sir Abdul Hamid, C.I.E., O.B.E.	Regional Food Commissioner, Rajputana Region.

GROUP LIAISON OFFICERS.

1	Mr. Balkrishen	Group Liaison Officer, Punjab States.
2	Mr. Onkar Nath Bajpai	Group Liaison Officer, Eastern States.
3	Rao Bahadur S. V. Kanungo . . .	Group Liaison Officer, Central India States.

List of new gazetted appointments made in the Information and Broadcasting Department (Secretariat proper) during the period from the 1st April, 1943 to the 30th October, 1943.

Serial No.	Designation of the post.	Name of the officer appointed.	Community of the appointer	Date of Appointment.	Remarks.
1	Song Publicity Organiser . .	Mr. H. C. Akhtar . .	Hindu .	1-4-43	Promotion.
2	Additional Deputy Secretary .	Dr. T. G. P. Spear .	English .	23-6-43 to 4-10-43	Do.
3	Deputy Secretary . . .	Ditto . .	Do. .	5-10-43	
4	Assistant Counter Propaganda Officer.	Mrs. Manorma Elhence .	Hindu .	12-7-43	Direct Appointment by election after advertisement in the press.
5	Ditto . . .	Mr. N. A. Pillai . .	Do. .	12-7-43	
6	Joint Secretary . . .	Mr. P. N. Thapar, I.C.S.	Do. .	14-9-43	Promotion.
7	Executive Officer-in-Charge of the Naval Sub-Section of the Exhibition Section.	Lt. S.N. Cohen R.I.N. V.R.	Indian Christian.	8-9-43	On loan from War Department.
8	Central Organiser National War Front.	Dr. K. T. Behanan .	Do.	20-9-43	Promotion.
9	Campaigns Planning Officer .	Mr. Denys M. Scott .	English .	22-9-43	Do.
10	Business Manager and Joint Advertising Consultant.	Mr. M. A. Hussain .	Muslim .	24-9-43	Direct Appointment.
11	Assistant Secretary . . .	Mr. H. P. Kaul . .	Hindu .	6-10-43	Promotion.
12	Officer on Special Duty . .	Mr. S. S. Bajpai . .	Do. .	6-10-43	Do.
13	Lady-in-Charge, Women's Section	Begum Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz.	Muslim .	9-10-43	Do.
14	Deputy Secretary . . .	Maj. A. S. B. Shah .	Do. .	20-10-43	Transfer.
15	Superintendent . . .	Mr. Bashir Ahmed .	Do. .	22-10-43	Promotion.

Statement showing the new gazetted appointments made in the Supply Department from 1st April 1943 to 30th October 1943.

Name of office.	Total number of appointments made.	Hindus.	Muslims.	Europeans.	Other minority communities.	Remarks.
1. Main Sectt. . .	*11	5	2	3	1	*4 posts filled by promotion and one by re-transfer.
2. D. G. M. P. † D. G. A.	†118	39	3	64	12	†28 posts have been filled by promotion includes 22 posts filled by transfer.
3. D. G. S. . . .	‡59	32		¶14		‡ 5 appointments were sanctioned before 30th October 1943, but appointees have not yet joined. ¶ Includes two Americans.
4. D. G. S. R. . .	18	1		15		
5. C. A. O. (P.) . .	§31	17		1		§2 appointments were sanctioned before 30th October 1943, but appointees joined after that date.
6. Controllers of Supplies	4	3				5 posts filled by promotion.
7. Electrical Commissioner.	6	4				
8. Iron and Steel Controller.	9	4				
Total .	‖256	105 or 41·01%	22 or 8·59%	101 or 39·45%	28 or 10·93%	‖37 posts filled by promotion.

EXPORT OF RICE FROM ORISSA AND ORISSA STATES.

49. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: (*a*) Will Government state what was the total quantity of rice exported annually from Orissa from 1936-37 to 1942-43, giving separately as far as possible the figures relating to the Orissa States and the province of Orissa ?

(*b*) What are the States whose exports of rice pass through the province of Orissa ? Are there any States which send their surplus rice to any other province ? If so, will Government state the names of these States and the province through which their exports pass ? What is the total quantity of rice exported by them annually ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : (*a*) A statement is placed on the table giving the required information as far as available. As statistics have not been maintained separately for Orissa and Orissa States, it is regretted that separate figures cannot be given.

(*b*) Information to answer this part of the question is not available but it is understood that a few of the more northerly of the Orissa States used to export their rice to Bihar and the more southerly to Madras. It is probable that there were exports to Bengal also from the States on the north-east but details are not available.

Statement showing total exports of Rice from Orissa during 1936-37 to 1942-43.

(In '000 tons).

	1936-37.	1937-38.	1938-39.	1939-40.	1940-41.	1941-42.	1942-43.
Rail . .	(*a*)	153	180	169	146	159	115
Sea . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Coast . .	(*b*)	13	26	20	14	13	(*b*)
Total		166	206	189	160	172	115 (*c*)

(*a*) Trades Statistics for 1936-37 are not separately available ; included in figures for Bihar.
(*b*) Not readily available.
(*c*) Incomplete.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : With regard to part (*a*) of the question, may I know whether it is a fact that the figures relating to exports from States have been separated from those relating to exports from Orissa Province since December last ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Yes, Sir; that is correct.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Has the information relating to the States and the Province of Orissa been supplied separately for the period from December, 1942 upto the present time?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: As regards the quantity exported from Orissa from 1936-37, we are not in a position to supply separate figures for the States. But if the Honourable Member wants to have the figures of export from the States from December, 1942, I can give those figures.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Both for the Province and the States?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Yes.

EXPORT OF RICE FROM ORISSA.

50. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: What is the total quantity of rice exported from Orissa since December, 1942?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: So far as information is available, about 126,000 tons of rice have been exported from Orissa since December, 1942.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO BENGAL FOR FAMINE.

51. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Have the Government of India given any financial assistance to the Government of Bengal in connection with the famine in Bengal? If so, will they give full particulars regarding it?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: The problem facing the Government of Bengal in the famine areas is not so much a matter of finance as of securing and distributing adequate food supplies. Since June last the Government of India have made available to the Government of Bengal advances totalling 3 crores for general ways and means purposes and 7 crores for grain purchases in addition to advances totalling nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ crore in connexion with the "Grow More Food" campaign.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Are these advances interest-free, Sir?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: No, Sir. We charge interest at a rate appropriate to the anticipated duration of the advance.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: May we have some indication of the rate of interest that will be charged?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: I have not got the figures, but on a ways and means advance which is expected to be repaid in a year we would charge about 2 per cent.; while in the case of an advance for the purpose of purchase of foodgrains which it is expected will be paid as and when the purchased grain is sold, the rate might be about 1 per cent.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: What about the "Grow More Food" campaign advances?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: Those, I think, are interest-free.

SUPPLY OF FOODGRAINS TO BENGAL.

52. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: (*a*) What is the total quantity of (*i*) rice, (*ii*) wheat and its products and (*iii*) other foodgrains sent to Bengal from other provinces?

(*b*) How much of this was sent to (*i*) Calcutta since the 15th July, and (*ii*) the districts?

(*c*) What is the quantity of foodgrains sent to Calcutta in October, 1943?

(*d*) What is the quantity of foodgrains despatched daily to the districts by (*i*) rail, (*ii*) sea and river and (*iii*) other means of transport through official agencies?

(*e*) What is the total quantity of foodgrains in Calcutta belonging to the Government of Bengal?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), (*d*) and (*e*) A statement is laid on the table.

Statement showing the supply of Foodgrains, etc. to Bengal.

(*a*) The following quantities have been despatched to Bengal from other provinces since December, 1942 to the end of October, 1943.

	Tons.
Rice	244,000
Wheat and Wheat products	213,000
Other foodgrains	65,000

(*b*) The total quantity of foodgrains despatched to Bengal from other Provinces (and States) since the fifteenth July is as follows —

	Tons.
Rice	80,000
Wheat and Wheat products	145,000
Other foodgrains	40,000
Total	265,000

Of this amount despatches to districts, either direct from the supplying areas or from consignments first sent to Calcutta, amounted to the following figures.

	Tons.
Rice	13,000
Wheat and Wheat products	22,000
Other foodgrains	11,000

and, therefore, the balance which was available for Calcutta amounts to :—

	Tons.
Rice.	67,000
Wheat and Wheat products	123,000
Other foodgrains	29,000

(*c*) About 66,000 tons.

(*d*) The present programme of daily despatches is about 1,425 tons by rail and 625 tons by river and rail from Calcutta. In addition about 400 tons of wheat products per day are being despatched from the Punjab.

(*e*) Stocks in Calcutta on 1st November, 1943, on account of the Bengal Government amounted to about 64,000 tons.

PROPORTION OF IMPORTED WHEAT RECEIVED BY BENGAL.

53. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Will Government state how much wheat has come to India from abroad and how much of it has been received by Bengal?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Since October last about 45,000 tons of wheat has been imported into India of which about 35,000 tons has been allotted to Bengal.

CHARGES BY U. P. GOVERNMENT ON EXPORT OF OIL-SEEDS.

54. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Are Government aware that the United Provinces Government is charging rupees two to three and a half on export of oil-seeds? If so, under what law or regulation? Do the Government of India propose to take any action, if so, what?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: The Government of the United Provinces have under Rule 81 of the Defence of India Rules prohibited exports of oil-seeds from the Province except on Government account. It is understood that they are buying oilseeds for export at Rs. 12 per maund and are selling to importing merchants at Rs. 14 per maund. The matter is under consideration.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: How long has this matter been under consideration?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: For the past week or so.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Is that all? Did not the Government of India receive any information from the merchants who were affected by this order in the United Provinces some weeks ago?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: No, Sir, not in my Department.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Is it a fact, Sir, that this is only a transfer account and there is no reality of Government's purchase and sale?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: That is your argument. It is not a question. Please put the question in proper form.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Is it a fact that the Government neither purchase nor sell but simply a transaction takes place in the office of sending and taking back and the only thing that Government does is to take Rs. 2 a maund ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: That is your argument.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Is it a fact that the Government is making a profit of Rs. 2 or Rs. 3 a maund without taking physical possession of the stocks ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: I can say nothing more on the subject at this stage than that the whole thing is under consideration.

U. P. GOVERNTENT'S CHARGE ON EXPORT OF *Gur*.

55. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Is it a fact that in the case of *gur* the U. P. Government is making a charge on export ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Yes, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: May we ask, Sir, how *gur* is dealt with by the Food Department and oil-seed by the Department of Commerce ?

(No Answer.)

EXAMINATION BY THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE OF THE COST OF DEFENCE PURCHASES.

56. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Has the attention of Government of India been drawn to the report of the United Kingdom Public Accounts Committee on price of ships (reported in the *Statesman* of 4th November, 1943) ? Has the Indian Public Accounts Committee been given any facility to examine the cost of Defence Purchases, if so, of what item; if not do they propose to give any facilities ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: The Government of India have not yet received a copy of the report of the United Kingdom Public Accounts Committee to which the Honourable Member refers.

The Military Accounts Committee which, as a sub-committee of the Indian Public Accounts Committee, scrutinises the accounts of Defence Services expenditure, has the opportunity of examining *inter alia* the cost of any of the various Defence Purchases and of criticising the system of purchase with reference to the observations in the Audit Report on Defence Services.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: May we know whether the same facilities are given to the Military Accounts Committee as are given in the U. K. to the United Kingdom Public Accounts Committee ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: Yes, Sir, so far as I am aware.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSIAN IMAM: Has any of the remarks made by the Auditor General on the accounts of the Defence Services been endorsed or acted upon by the Military Accounts Services ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: I am afraid I do not fully understand the question. Audit is perfectly at liberty to, and actually does, offer its comments freely on war time purchase of stores, on individual transactions, on the system of price fixation and so on, and these are carefully examined. Witnesses are called by the Military Accounts Committee, the Auditor General is consulted on these points, and the Military Accounts Committee and through them the Public Accounts Committee have thus every opportunity of forming their own independent opinion on the points that are brought to their motice in the light of the examination which they hold.

PROSECUTION OF A FOODGRAINS PURCHASING AGENT OF BENGAL GOVERNMENT BY THE U. P. GOVERNMENT.

57. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Is it a fact that the Government of the United Provinces has prosecuted an agent of Bengal Government for storing foodgrains ? What action do they propose to take ? If not, why not ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The matter is subjudice.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Is it a crime for any Government to prosecute an Agent of the Bengal Government ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Who said that ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: The question says: "What action do they propose to take ?" That suggests it.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The agent has been prosecuted by the District Magistrate concerned. The same is subjudice.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I wanted to know, Sir, whether the purchases of Governments are on a different footing from the purchases by a private person. That is all the question implies.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Why don't you put your question in proper form instead of asking for information?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I am not asking for information. I am replying to what fell from the Honourable Mr. Sen.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I do not object, but it is not put in proper form.

That concludes the List of Questions.

NOTICE OF MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Honourable Members, I have received notice of a motion for adjournment from two Honourable Members of the House. It has been jointly signed by the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam and the Honourable Mr. P. N. Sapru. The notice reads as follows:—

"I wish to move that this House do adjourn to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the suppression of freedom loving Lebanese by French Imperialists and the urgent need of the Government of India communicating the strong feelings of Indians to His Majesty's Government to urge them to act without delay in restoring normal conditions in Lebanon."

Mr. Hossain Imam, I would like you to satisfy me that this adjournment motion is in order.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa: Muhammadan): Mr. President, our *locus standi* in this matter comes by the use of Indian troops during the time we fought the French wars in Syria and Lebanon to get possession of them—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Order, order. I do not want you to go into the merits of the motion. I want you to satisfy me that it is permissible for this House to give consideration to this motion.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: As our troops have been used in these conquests and His Majesty's Government have given an undertaking that liberty will be restored to these areas, I thought that the Government of India should enter a protest on our behalf just as other Governments have done.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will you tell me if you could have moved a Resolution to this effect in this House?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: It depends on you, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: It does not depend on me. Such a Resolution would be barred by rule 12, clause (*5*).

*THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, the only consideration that I shall put before you is that India is an original member of the League of Nations and Syria is a Mandated Territory under France of the League of Nations.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I fully sympathise with your Motion. I want to know what power I have got to admit this Motion. Will you satisfy me on that? It does not concern the Government of India. An adjournment motion is essentially a motion of censure. How is the Government of India liable to censure on a matter with which it is not connected in any way and has no power whatever?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: May I explain it? The Government of India is a belligerent in this war and the Government of India is an original member of the League of Nations. Syria is a mandate of the League of Nations. Therefore the Government of India can communicate to His Majesty's Government what the feelings of Indians are in respect of this Lebanese business. Therefore I say that in so far as the Government of India has failed to make any representation or at any rate has failed to make known to the public that it has made any representations to His Majesty's Government, the adjournment motion is justified as a censure motion. That is my line of argument.

*THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU (United Provinces Northern: Non-Muhammadan): May I put another construction? This Motion need not be regarded as a Motion of censure on the Government of India. The Government of India are no party to what has happened in Syria.

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: All adjournment motions are motions of censure.

*THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: It may be so, but it is quite clear that nobody here wants to censure the Government of India for what has happened in Beirut. They were in no way responsible for the action taken by de Gaulle's party and it is clear that the object of the Motion is therefore that the Government of India, following its traditional role of representing the feelings of Indians in regard to international affairs, should on this occasion also represent the feelings of the people of India to His Majesty's Government on this subject. Mr. Montagu did it in the case of Turkey. I think therefore that we might well ask the Government of India to perform a similar role now. Very probably if this Motion were adopted the spokesman of the Government of India would be able to express complete concurrence with our view. Indeed so far as can be judged from the papers His Majesty's Government have already protested to the French Committee of National Liberation against the step taken under its authority in Beirut.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I am not concerned with that.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: When we used to send representatives to the League of Nations the selection used to be made by the E., H. and L. Department.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will you answer my plain question? You ask the President of this Council to go beyond the scope of rule 12 of the rules framed under the Government of India Act. Is it possible?

*THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: You look upon it as a Motion of censure. Technically it may be a Motion of censure, but in effect what we are asking the Government of India to do is to represent our feelings in regard to this matter to His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government have already taken some action and have not associated themselves with the de Gaulle's action.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Assuming your argument is correct, you could not move the motion even as a Resolution without the consent of the Governor General. I do not think the Motion is in order and I disallow it.

STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF FOOD.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN (Nominated Official): Sir, I beg to move:—

"That this Council do proceed to elect in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct five non-official members to serve on the Standing Committee to advise on subjects in the Department of Food during the remainder of the financial year 1943-44."

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa: Muhammadan): Mr. President, I should like to be enlightened as to the functions of this committee. Is it to be like other Standing Committees of the House which have no work to do for the entire Session and which are only called for if there is no work to do and even then they are called just to make a record that a meeting has been held?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (Bihar: Non-Muhammadan): What I wish to suggest is that in the kind of situation this country is facing at present what we really need is a committee that will sit from day to day and sit for a month or so. An advisory committee of the kind we are asked to elect would be absolutely of no value. These committees meet once in six months. They may provide quite a good pleasure visit to Delhi for many of us. But, in fact it does lead to the moral degradation of all of us. We have been constantly attending these committees and returning with no recollection of having done any work. What I strongly advocate and urge Government to do in a situation like this is to appoint a committee of the members of both the Houses, to assist, to advise them, if they are fond of advice; and if they can tolerate direction, to direct them in regard to the present crisis. What we want is a committee that will sit from day to day until the situation is relieved. I think Government should change their mind in this matter,—particularly in this matter where the famine is taking such a heavy toll of human lives and is staining the fair name of Government, if the Government had at any time a fair name, all over the world. Government should even for once in their lifetime—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: We have got a lot of other work to do.

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: There is no work which is more important than the food question. That is the question that faces us today. In fact, Sir, before a famished people no one may dare not appear except in the form of food. I do not think this committee is of any value or would be any consolation to us. Government must change their mind immediately and have a committee which will sit from day to day until the situation is solved. On a Motion of this character for the appointment of a formal Standing Committee, I would advise every non-official member of this House to dissociate himself from such a committee unless the committee is vested with proper powers.

*THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU (United Provinces Northern: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, the matter with which this Resolution deals is an important one. We naturally expected therefore that the member who introduced this Motion will be able to inform us fully of the functions of this committee. A committee like this may be concerned either with a long term policy or with the arrangements to be made immediately for the relief of famine in Bengal, Orissa and certain other parts of India. We have, however, not been informed at all as to what the functions of this Committee will be and in what manner it is proposed to utilise the assistance of the non-official Members of this House in solving the food question. I therefore agree with my Honourable friend Mr. Mahtha in pressing on Government the need for clearing up the situation. If this Committee is meant to act in the same dilatory way as the other Committees act, if it may not meet at all except once in a year and that only formally, I think that the public would be lulled into a false sense of security if this House quietly accepted such a Resolution and allowed its members to join the proposed Committee. It is yet time for Government to throw more light on the question and to tell us what exactly they mean to achieve by our co-operation and what are exactly the duties which they propose to assign to us.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Sir, during the last session a desire was expressed by some non-official Members that there should be a Standing Committee to advise the Food Department as the Department was growing in importance. As there was not much time to go through the formalities to set up such a Standing Committee it was agreed that the Standing Committee for the Commerce Department should be utilised by the Food Department for the purpose. Now the Food Department is most anxious that the Members of this House should be closely associated with the work of that Department and that is why the Department has come forward to have a Standing Committee of their own. The question has been asked as to what the functions of this Committee would be. Sir, the functions of this Committee would be to advise the Department in all important matters, both long-term and short-term. It is not possible at this stage to specify what are the items upon which advice will be sought. We are most anxious to have the advice of Members of this as well as of the other House.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern: Non-Muhammadan): May I just ask one or two questions?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You cannot ask questions.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: I just want some information, Sir. The Honourable Mr. Sen has told us that a Food Department Committee was constituted last session informally. Now did that Committee ever meet during all this time?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: I am sorry, Sir, to say that the Committee met only once, but that is no reason why this Committee which we propose now should not sit as often as may be necessary.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Did it meet as a Food Department Committee or as a Commerce Department Committee?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: It was a Standing Committee for the Commerce Department but it was utilised for the Food Department.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Did it meet as a Food Committee? If Food was incidentally discussed as part of the Commerce Department then it would not be meeting as a Food Committee but as a Commerce Department Committee.

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : As I have explained there was no time to constitute a Committee for the Food Department formally and that is why it was agreed among the members that the Committee for the Commerce Department should also advise the Food Department till a proper Committee was constituted for the Food Department.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : What I want to know is whether the members of the Commerce Department Committee were to act as members of the Food Committee. If that is the position did they discuss any Food questions or did they discuss only Commerce questions ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B R. SEN : Entirely Food questions.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Well, the position that we take is this : that we are so much dissatisfied with the entire working of the Food Department that we cannot commit ourselves at this stage to participation in the Food Committee.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHAUDHURY (West Bengal : Non-Muhammadan) : Will the Honourable Member give us an assurance that the advice given by the Food Committee will be accepted by the Government ?

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS : How can he give an assurance ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : You complain that you are not consulted. When you are asked to co-operate you say you refuse to co-operate. You are blowing hot and cold at the same time. It is an impossible position you take up.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : May I suggest, Sir——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Order, order. You can discuss this on the Food debate.

Motion moved :—

"That this Council do proceed to elect in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct five non-official members to serve on the Standing Committee to advise on subjects in the Department of Food during the remainder of the financial year 1943-44."

The Motion was adopted.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : With reference to the motion which has just been adopted by the Council, I have to announce that nominations will be received by the Secretary up to eleven O'clock on Friday, the 19th November, 1943, and the date of election, if necessary, will be announced later.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : May I suggest that as we are meeting till Wednesday, the time may be given till Monday for nominations ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : But there is no time because I want the House to be adjourned on the 24th. Unless the Government Member agrees to it I cannot give you any time.

RESOLUTION *RE* FINANCIAL HELP TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan): Mr. President, before I move this Resolution may I, with your permission, drop the latter part of it "and to make more foodgrains available from military and civil sources". I think it will be more proper to discuss it with the Food situation.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : A very wise step.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I rise, Sir, to move that :—

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to render adequate and generous financial help of at least seven crores to the Government of Bengal to meet the present emergency of food shortage."

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The rest of the Resolution will be discussed on Food debate. Is that your point ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Yes, Sir.

This Resolution, Sir, has not been brought in to get an additional Food debate and therefore I have dropped out the latter part. My intention primarily is to discuss the financial implications of the present situation. I shall shear off all controversial subjects and shall confine myself to a discussion of the tragic situation and the ways and means of ameliorating it. This, Sir, is no time for indulging in party squabbles and making political capital out of the death that is taking

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

place in Bengal. I think it is a singularly ill-advised action of people to make political capital out of it. I, for one, Sir, am not going to commit that mistake. The Bengal situation, Sir, calls for help from all sources irrespective of party affiliations and religious professions, religious and non-religious, Indians and Europeans, the representatives of the people and the Government. I would even go further and say that even people outside India are all agreed that the suffering and the plight of the people of Bengal is terrible, that they are in the midst of a catastrophe the like of which has never visited any pary of India—at least any large part of India—during recent times. Sir, the matter has been discussed in the other House and I would not like to repeat much of the arguments which have been advanced there. But there are certain fundamental causes which have led up to the present situation. I do not wish to throw any blame, but the Government of India and His Majesty's Government cannot deny that the situation has been brought about by actions which may have been perfectly right in their own context, but which have caused this trouble. I place foremost in the list, the occupation of Burma by the Japanese. That was the first exciting cause of the present trouble. Had not Burma been separated from India, it would not have been left to fend for itself when it was attacked by Japan. The initial mistake of His Majesty's Government in having separated Burma was primarily responsible for the poor show that was put up in Burma. I am not going to discuss the past history how the British Government, in order to support the British shipping industry, would not construct any roads or railway between India and Burma. That is an old story. Suffice it for me at the present moment to say that the province of Bengal used to depend to a large extent on imports of rice and paddy from Burma. That source of supply was cut off early in 1942. The reserves that we had as well as the imports that we had made helped us to tide over a period of a year and a quarter, till March, 1943. Because of the conservative character of the people, who usually lay by something in the rural areas for the rainy day or against a failure of the monsoon, because of certain conservative measures which they adopt, we were able to pass through a year and a quarter without the trouble which we are experiencing in the financial year 1943-44. That was the first cause.

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The second cause was the policy of denial. This also the military may have very rightly adopted—I mean the policy of removal of stocks of foodgrains from certain exposed districts last year after the rains. That action on the part of the military was perhaps a necessary precaution against the dangers which we faced last year. Nevertheless there can be no denial of the fact that the situation was brought about by an action of the Government of India under directions from His Majesty's Government.

Then I come to the third cause which has played a great part in bringing about the situation in Bengal—the destruction of boats. Now, Sir, the function of a boat in Bengal is peculiar. It functions as a transport. It provides transport facilities, and it also acts as a source of supply of foodstuffs. In Bengal, as is well known, fish is one of the staple foods. Much of the fishery industry was completely stopped due to the destruction of sailing boats. I do not blame the Government for having taken these necessary steps, but I do wish them to realise how they have been instrumental in bringing about the presentday conditions in Bengal.

I should like the Government to consider whether there are not two kinds of debt which they owe to the country—a debt which they owe to the individual, and a debt which they owe to the country at large. For instance, at many places where you have constructed aerodromes you have taken away land from the people. Now, your function as far as the individual is concerned is perfectly discharged when you have paid him compensation for the lands that you have acquired. But your duty to the country is not discharged by that. Your duty to the country requires that if the land that you have acquired was under food grains, you should see that more land is put under foodgrains. I think that the Government realise their duty. That is why the Finance Member, in spite of his great caution and his great regard for saving public money, was generous enough to promise every help which he could give for the "Grow More Food Campaign." He realises that he owes a duty to the

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country at large. I similarly urge that the Government of India should consider whether it has discharged all its responsibilities and duties simply by having paid compensation for the foodgrains that were destroyed or were removed from their places, and by having paid a compensation for the boats that were destroyed. They do not end there.

If you consider the primitive character of Indian economy, you will realise how even slight actions produce great effects. I will give you an illustration. If you remove foodgrains from one area and do not replenish the stocks there, the result is that everybody who has got even a seer of foodgrains is afraid to sell out. The result is that prices will start rising. This rise in price would induce the neighbouring areas to send their supplies to this area. Now, the neighbouring areas, in their turn, as a self-protective measure, would increase the prices in their own territories in order to keep the foodgrains in. And this sort of tug-of-war will go on between the rise in prices in the deficit area and the resultant rise in prices in the neighbouring areas.

Government utterly failed in their duty in not replenishing those areas when the danger had been removed. They grossly neglected their duty when they failed to supply Bengal with boats and other transport facilities when the danger had been removed. If they had taken these two precautions in time, the plight of Bengal would not have been as bad as it is today.

I ask whether the Government have fully realised the ineffectiveness of all the measures which they have taken so far. Everyone who has been in Bengal has admitted that more could be profitably done to help the people. I have before me the speech of the Premier of Bengal which he delivered on the 15th instant at the meeting of the Council of the All-India Muslim League. I find from it that the Bengal Government has set up relief committees in 3,904 out of just over 5,600 Unions in the Province.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will the Honourable Member confine himself to the amended Resolution. All that will come up on the two days reserved for the food debate. If he confines himself to the Resolution he will do more justice to it.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I am just drawing your attention to the fact that what Bengal has done at great cost and loss to itself——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESDIENT: You can do so on Friday during the food debate.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Mr. President, the reason why I have brought forward this Resolution dropping an important Resolution which I was going to move in substitution of this is because I regard that the Bengal situation cannot be ameliorated without financial aid. It is beyond the means of the Bengal Government and the Bengal people to face this crisis alone.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I quite agree, but you can say all this on the food debate.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I want, first of all, to have a background against which I can make a picture. Without a background I cannot make a picture in vacuo. Sir, I was saying that relief committees have been established, according to the Premier, in 3,904 out of 5,600 Unions. That shows that much remains to be done still. If we go further, we find that the number of free kitchens is not adequate. There are 6,146 free kitchens set up in the province of which 562 are run and financed by private organisations and all credit is due to those who are responsible for this charity and high-mindedness, and all discredit on this Government which consists of a majority of Indian Members and yet cannot open a single free kitchen in the whole province of Bengal in spite of its income of Rs. 200 crores. And yet, Sir, when I make a demand for a paltry sum of Rs. 7 crores, objection is raised. I shall show what other nations have done for other countries——

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGERDRA SINGH (Education, Health and Lands Member): The Honourable Member referred to the speech of the Premier of Bengal. He has pointed out the number of kitchens that have been opened by Government. I think they are over 4,000.

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: These have been opened by the Bengal Government. I am questioning the generosity of the Government of India which can only act as a Jew, a bunya, a Kabuli—give money on loan.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: But is it not the position of the autonomous provinces that they want to run their own affairs without any assistance from outside?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I will just give an instance to the Honourable Member-in-charge of Education, Health and Lands. I have before me the speech of the Honourable the President of the U. S. A. in which he has said that during the course of 14 months he has sent to Greece something in the neighbourhood of——

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO (Nominated: Non-Official): Sir, the Honourable Member has deleted the second part of his Resolution which deals with the food question. Therefore, what he is now saying is not relevant for the purpose of the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I have already said that.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Sir, we want money to buy foodstuffs. The trouble of Bengal is that prices are so high that it is beyond the means of a good number of the public of Bengal to buy food at all. The necessity is to have free kitchens and cheap grain shops. You cannot have them without financial aid. That is my proposition. If the Honourable Sir Parsuram Patro can show me that he can open a free kitchen without any money, I will be very much indebted to him and I will ask the Bengal Government to appoint him as their Food Adviser, if I can do it. The calamity of Bengal is not such as you can compare it with the day to day difficulties. It is not an ordinary thing which could have been provided for in the constitution. It is an extraordinary thing—man made, Government made and United Kingdom made, for which these three authorities must take responsibility. It is due to financial irresponsibility as well.

Mr. President, I was saying that the Premier of Bengal has remarked that there were 562 free kitchens run and financed by private organisations, 4,080 by the Government and 1,504 by non-officials but subsidised by the Government. These kitchens will feed 22,80,000 people daily out of a population of 6 crores. That is due to the generosity of the people of India but not of the Government of India. Mark how separate and disconnected with the people the Government are. In addition to the above, uncooked food is being given to 2 lakhs of persons while 5 lakhs more are being helped with cash doles. The Government and the public of India have done all they could do. With the single exception of the Government of India every body has come to the rescue of the Bengal people. Even Ireland has offered £100,000 for the relief of Bengal, but the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of India have nothing to spare. Ireland is more connected with Bengal than the Government of India. Ireland asks for a share in the Government of Bengal for giving this help but the Government of India have not given any financial help because they have no hand in the management of the affairs of that province. I shall show during the discussion on the food situation how every action of the Government of Bengal in the matter of food has been dictated by the Food Department of the Government of India. My appeal now is that even this much that they have done is not enough. I do not find my Honourable friend Mr. Kunzru in his seat now. He has been to Bengal. He has seen conditions for himself and in his published statement he has mentioned that there are towns and districts, especially in flooded Burdwan and Midnapore, where much more is required to be done. I was, as a matter of fact, actuated by the statement of the Honourable Pandit Kunzru in moving this Resolution than by anything else. I do realise that the resources of Bengal are not sufficient to shoulder this burden. Our trouble with the Government of India has been that it is wooden; when we tell that a thing is coming, it will refuse to see it, and when a blizzard comes, it will say that it is a blizzard and it cannot be helped. That is the trouble with a bureaucratic Government which is not intimately connected with the public life. Sir, we who are intimately connected with the public life and who know all the troubles to which our kith and kin are subject know how great is the suffering of Bengal. I would ask the Finance Department to give me one assurance that all possible aid is being

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

given to Bengal and no more help is required and I will withdraw my Resolution. If that certificate is given by the Finance Department and by those who oppose my Resolution, I shall be the first to withdraw my Resolution. My Resolution presupposes that there is a great deal of leeway to make up. I would invite the attention of the Finance Department to the concluding portion of the speech of the Honourable the Premier to which I have referred. This is what he says :—

"I think it is the duty of the British Government and the Government of India not only to bear all expenses so far incurred for the relief of the distress but to undertake to meet the expenditure necessary for the rehabilitation of the famished men, women and children. The war is the primary cause of the present misfortune."

Is the Government of India either in its food aspect, or in its financial aspect or in its grow more food campaign aspect, prepared to give us this undertaking that relief measures so far undertaken in Bengal are quite sufficient to meet the situation, that no more need be done ? If they are not prepared to do this, as I think no one would venture to give this assurance, the only question which arises is who is to bear this burden of additional cost. Is this calamity due to any fault of the people of Bengal or of its Governments ? I include both the Governments of Fazl-ul-Haq and the Nazimuddin Government. Are these two primarily and solely responsible for the present plight ? Why should the people of Bengal be punished by having to take all this loan and incur these deficits and carry the burden all alone ? You deny to the provinces the liberty which a self-governing country would have. You dangle before it the advantages of having a central administration, but the central administration is there only to order and to give no help. This is the principle which is being enunciated by the present day Government which unfortunately is composed of a majority of Indians. I for one had expected better treatment from a Government consisting of Indians. I shall give detailed figures later on. But for Greece, as is well known, the United States of America supplied wheat free of charge at the rate of 15,000 tons for more than a year. A country which is under enemy occupation is better off than a country which is under the aegis of the British Empire which is entitled to more help and greater sympathy from the United Nations. I would remind the Finance Secretary to see the report of the speech of Sir Maurice Hallett reported in today's paper in which he says that the help to Bengal is a contribution towards help of the war effort because you cannot have a war effort in a famished country. This was the speech delivered probably yesterday in Hathras, a place within a hundred miles of the metropolitan city of Delhi.

*THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU (United Provinces Northern : Non-Muhammadan) : Has Sir Maurice Hallett suggested a donation of 7 crores to the Bengal Government ?

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I am surprised to hear this question from my Honourable friend Mr. Kunzru who has himself suggested that relief measures must be augmented and that much more should be done for the relief of distress.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Is it a fact ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : It is no question of fact——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Address the Chair.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I shall have to repeat my remarks at the time of the discussion of the food situation. The Government of India formerly disbelieved in the calamitic nature of the blizzard which has swept over Bengal, and when they did come forward with help that help was niggardly. I will just remind you of one story which came to my personal knowledge. An American missionary friend of mine complained to me that he wanted to remove some families from Bengal to give them employment at some other place upcountry near about Delhi and his complaint was that he could not get them there. The War Transport Member would not allow them to come to these parts without paying for their tickets. Can you imagine a more callous attitude than this ? He is a Christian missionary coming from America. His heart was moved but the stony heart of the Government of India cannot be moved. It must have its pound of flesh. Everything that it gives must be paid for. The Government of India and some of my

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

friends seem to have the same feeling, that they are not bound to help the people of Bengal; they can give only lip sympathy but no financial help. Money can be squandered in the name of war and you can indulge in any expenditure.

I began by saying that I will not bring in any controversial subject. I am afraid I did bring in some subjects, but I was provoked to do so. My only excuse is that the iniquity of the Government of India's action in behaving in the manner in which they have been asking for price for everything has prompted me to lose a little of my reasonableness and go beyond the non-controversial nature of my subject. I hope, Sir, that a greater sense will prevail with the Government of India, and especially with the Finance Department, and they will do all that is needed to help the people of Bengal out of their present troubles.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: Sir, the Resolution asks that at least 7 crores of rupees be given over to Bengal. Sir, it is a tall order. Seven crores have already been lent to the Bengal Government and 5 crores more are to be given.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: There is no generosity in giving loans.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: Bengal has been the sport of politics. It is politics that is responsible for the tragedies of the poor people. Therefore in giving any money to such Government, one has got to be very careful in the matter of accounts and see how the money is to be utilised. It is not that the Premier makes a speech; he may make a hundred speeches. How the money is to be utilised for the benefit of the people is not at all stated.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: The Government of Bengal——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will you please not interfere? You can reply when you get another opportunity. You should not interrupt.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Is interruption not allowed in a debate?

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: From April to October 470,000 tons of food were imported to Bengal. What has become of this 470,000 tons of food imported into Bengal from April to October? How has it been distributed? Has it been distributed in such a manner as to reach the thanas, the villages, or has it been all absorbed in the city of Calcutta, absorbed by hoarders, absorbed by profiteers? What has become of the 470,000 tons of food?

It has to be sent to the Provinces, to the districts, to the thanas, to the villages. This must have been distributed by proper Relief Committees. Has any account of these 470,000 tons been made, and this not being so, and having learnt lessons from that, we have to be very careful in giving 7 crores of rupees? I do not grudge at all having given 4 or 5 crores of rupees to Bengal. Bengal deserves it, perhaps Bengal needs it and Bengal wants it for all its purposes. Bengal wants 7 crores of rupees and this sum may well be given but the question is how is it to be utilised in view of no account having been given of the 470,000 tons of food.

Then, again, after all Bengal has been made much of, not only here in India but internationally also, but then look at the condition of people in South India. South India, Travancore are worse than Bengal, Cochin is worse than Bengal, Malabar is worse than Bengal, the Ceded Districts and the East Coast are worse than Bengal. What has the Government done to relieve the people in these famine stricken areas? On the East Coast the cyclone devastated the crops altogether, houses were destroyed and people were homeless, houseless and foodless. Again in the Ceded Districts there has been famine, notorious famine, and what has been done by the Government. The Famine Code is there and the Famine Relief Fund is there; they are simply administered but what help has been given by the Imperial Government to the Ceded Districts? In Malabar people are dying like rats owing to famine conditions, and Malabar is one of very wealthy districts and one of the districts which has contributed much to the war effort, one that has contributed to the war labour and Malabar is in a very sad plight. Travancore is equally bad, though it has contributed to the war as was admitted by the Viceroy himself, yet what has been done? What about all these districts which have been so severely affected? Why is it that you make much of Bengal——

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Because there are crores of people there and in the whole of your area there are not even 60 lakhs.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Please don't take any notice of him.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: But Bengal is favoured because of politics, because there are political rivalries there, because one party makes noise and manœuvres and manages things in such a way as to bring the other party to disgrace, that is the thing. Bengal has been made much of. No doubt in the city of Calcutta destitutes have come in, destitutes from other parts have been lured to Calcutta city, stating that food is available in Calcutta. Therefore the destitutes have all come over there, and the first duty of the Government of Bengal is that it should open relief centres not in one place but in every place, approximately every place of centre, village and near the towns and where people can easily go and have food. It is not so much that there is no food; it is because it is badly distributed. It is very badly managed by the Bengal Government and it is due to its inefficiency in the matter of management of food and its thorough failure in the matter of the management of famine and it is therefore itself responsible for the existing state of things. The Central Government has done what it could and it has found sufficient means of transport. You must remember that the war is our first concern and therefore the success in the war is our first concern and on that ground when there are such transport difficulties you cannot blame the Central Government to move slowly, cautiously in the matter but when they have moved they have moved food. Look at what has been done by the military. The Commander-in-Chief's statement to the Press Conference ought to convince us that the Government of Bengal is a thorough failure. Now look at the efficient way in which the military have organised it. The soldiers have given up their own rice rations and have taken to *atta*. The European soldiers have not been given rice and everywhere the military have been helping. Now, unlike the 470,000 tons of food that was mismanaged, when the food wagons come in they are put under military guidance; they are taken over and handed over to the depots in villages, taluks, thanas and there they are distributed, or even given to the free kitchens in a most efficient way. The military has been managing it but the military will not be there all the time. It is said that they will be there only for three months but I think after that the civil authorities should be able equally to manage when the crisis is over.

Now, Sir, Rs. 7 crores is wanted. Well calculated Bengal needs Rs. 7 crores and Rs. 50 crores even to rebuild, if stories that are circulated are true. In the districts Rs. 7 crores is like a drop in the ocean and in order to reconstruct and rebuild the rural areas much more is necessary and it is not a moment too soon to ask for a plan, but then the whole thing comes to this. Is it the responsibility of the Provincial Government or is it the responsibility of the Central Government? The Central Government should advance money and therefore you cannot ask that it should be given a free gift. If it is to be given a free gift what reason is there for you to refuse help to Ceded Districts, to the East Coast, to the Malabar?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: To everybody!

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: Yes, everybody who has been more severely affected——

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Yes, I will support you. Ask for financial help.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: But they have been managing their affairs much more carefully, much more efficiently, than the Bengal Government has been doing.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Sixty million population!

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: Travancore has been managing efficiently. They never asked for help.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Population of five millions!

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: Similarly, Cochin. Similarly, the East Coast. They have been managing their affairs all right. Even remissions of land tax were not given to them. Nearly 50 miles of coast was damaged. All the

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

villages situated on that strip of coast were destroyed. All the coast from Narasaraopeth to Vizianagram was destroyed. Cocoanut groves have gone; plantain gardens have been destroyed; and the houses all along the coast have been destroyed. People have been killed, and their cattle have been destroyed. All this damage has taken place on the East Coast. Yet, what help do you render them? Similarly, Malabar.

Therefore, Sir, while I do not grudge the help to be given to Bengal, we must have a guarantee that it will be properly administered and properly utilised for the benefit of the people. Therefore, it is very necessary that we should provide conditions on which that help will be given.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL (Bombay : Non-Muhammadan): Mr. President, the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution asks for financial help of at least seven crores to meet the present emergency of food shortage in the province of Bengal. I do not know how the Honourable the Mover has arrived at this figure of seven crores. I do not think at the moment it is possible to arrive at any definite figure to remove the food shortage in the province of Bengal.

We are aware, Sir, that His Excellency the Governor General, barely a week after he had assumed office, went personally to see the food situation in Bengal, and have firsthand knowledge of it. At a Press conference held in Bengal, at which His Excellency himself presided and at which the Governor of Bengal was also present, he said he had arrived at certain definite decisions. It is seldom that we come across such refreshing instances of high officials of Government taking decisions on the spot. Three of the most important decisions that he has arrived at are :—(1) the removal of destitutes to properly managed rest camps from where they can be despatched to their homes after restoration ; (2) Major-General Wakely is appointed to improve and operate a suitable movement system of foodgrains from Calcutta to the affected districts; and (3) the resources of the Army are made available particularly for the movement of foodgrains, provision of temporary shelter, and relief stores. This three-point programme takes full cognizance of the most important factors in the Bengal food situation, and I think it must be given a chance to work the system. The programme visualises the maximum help from Army resources, which, I dare say, includes the supplies from Army stores as a temporary relief.

In this matter, Sir, popular support counts, and we are told the military authorities will act in liaison with the civil authorities of the Government of Bengal, and it will be up to the officials of the Bengal Government to take advantage of such military assistance for distribution purposes as they desire.

The implication is clear that there is no disposition on the part of the Government of India to take away inititaive and responsibility from the Bengal Government, even though there is not recognition wanting that the Bengal Government have gravely mismanaged their duties. I am not anxious to accuse the Bengal Government or to create more hardship for them in their time of great stress and difficulties. If the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution had moved the second part of his Resolution, I would have supported him in his suggestion that military resources might be tapped and foodgrains from the military supplies might be given by way of temporary relief. I would have gone further and supported him in suggesting that even from the civil stores foodgrains might be sent to Bengal, consistent, of course, with the demands and requirements of the deficit provinces. But we cannot support a plea for a free gift to the tune of seven crores or more to the Government of Bengal without having adequate assurance from that Government and when we know that His Excellency the Governor General, with the aid of the military authorities, has taken the situation well in hand, and, if I may say so, when even public morale is improving, steming out the present rot in the food system.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (Bihar : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, Sir, I wish to express my fullest sympathies with the Resolution moved by my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam. In doing so, I would wish either Mr. Hossain Imam or the Government to satisfy my inquisitiveness in one matter, which is this. I would like to know what is the representation made by the Government of Bengal to the Government of India

[Rai Bahadur Sri Narain Mahtha·]

with regard to what they consider the needs of the province. When the Honourable the Mover was speaking, he had before him the speech of the Premier of Bengal. I thought that either from that speech or from some other speeches that the Premier might have made or from statements that he might have issued the Honourable Mover would be able to place before us information on the point that I have raised, namely, what, in the opinion of the Bengal Government, was the adequate help required to meet the needs of the hour. Since he has not done so, I think it is for the Government of India now to inform us whether they have received any representation from the Government of Bengal as to what they considered was the need of the province.

The problem, Sir, is an inter-related one. If there is shortage of food in Bengal, the Bengal Government cannot go and buy in Bombay unless the Bombay Government allow the purchase. And when they have made the purchase in Bombay, the Bengal Government cannot carry the food to Bengal unless the Government of India provide the transport. We certainly do appreciate and realise the interconnections, and naturally we are all anxious to see Bengal relieved of the situation that she is facing—a situation which may soon become widspread and affect other provinces of India. We are all very anxious to know if the Government of India have received any representation from the Bengal Government which gives them a picture of what the Government there consider to be the present need of the province and in what respects, be it charitable assistance, or be it loans, or be it facilities in other directions, they consider help to be necessary so that the present difficulties can be solved.

Sir, the Honourable Mr. Jones, in reply to a question this morning, said as follows :—

" The problem facing the Government of Bengal in the famine areas is not so much a matter of finance as of securing and distributing adequate food supplies. Since June last the Government of India have made available to the Government of Bengal advances totalling 3 crores for general ways and means purposes and 7 crores for grain purchases in addition to advances totalling nearly 3/4 crore in connection with the ' Grow More Food' campaign."

What I should like to know in this connection, is what is meant by advances. They are certainly repayable to the Government of India as I think he mentioned it in reply to supplementary questions. I suppose interest will also be charged on the advances made. And of course if interest is to be charged, the advance and interest thereon will be paid perhaps after one year or two years. In my opinion it cannot be called an act of callousness on the part of the Government of India to levy a rate of interest on the advances because it is not in the immediate future that the repayment is expected. I do not agree with Mr. Hossain Imam there. However there will be time to consider this again and every one hopes that Bengal will rise to the occasion and will soon be able to stand on her own feet.

The Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam also referred to a large number of free kitchens that are being run in Calcutta. I also had occasion to see some of them and I take this opportunity of offering my humble appreciation and tribute to all those who have contributed to the relief of Bengal—and they are not a few—but it is not so much for what they have paid that I thank them but for having paid it at the right time. Every one who has helped deserves the appreciation of every right-minded Indian on this occasion.

Sir, there is a reference in the reply of the Honourable Mr. Jones to the " Grow More Food " campaign. I will reserve my remarks on this question for the general food debate but I just like at this moment to say one or two things. The Government of India seem to have a very wrong conception of what results could be achieved out of the " Grow More Food " campaign. The point is this. If the agriculturist has a spare acre of land, if he has the necessary seed and extra pair of bullocks necessary to cultivate that extra acre of land, is he waiting for your propaganda to go and cultivate his land. If the price is there he will do it himself. India is an agricultural country. In fact, so much land had been going under this or that kind of cultivation that I heard a cry two or three years ago that there was hardly enough pasture land left for the cattle. But, unluckily for this country, you have reduced the number of even good productive cattle to the

great detriment of agriculture. If Government are relying on very marvellous results to come out of this "Grow More Food" campaign, they are relying on a broken reed. There are other problems to take into consideration. We saw reports in many papers that there were about 2 million acres of land lying in Assam where no cultivation has been done. If the Government of India concentrated on cultivating these 2 million acres of land, we would not have had this food trouble.

Sir, I would not like to prolong my remarks any further. I think you were right in advising us to reserve as much of our remarks for the food debate and not to take up very much time of the House on this question today.

THE HONOURABLE MR. J. H. BURDER (Bengal Chamber of Commerce): Sir, I think that Bengal should much appreciate the solicitous intention which comes in this Resolution from an Honourable Member from Bihar and Orissa. But, so far as the Resolution reads, it seems to infer that 7 crores or at least 7 crores is adequate. The Resolution runs:

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to render adequate and generous financial help of at least seven crores".

This seems to me to suggest that we are committing ourselves to saying that 7 crores is adequate help. I feel, Sir, that we should wait until we have seen or have heard from Government a statement of facts—audited facts—as to what help Bengal requires. Will they require help? It may be more than 7 crores. Meanwhile, are we right in committing ourselves or inferring in any way that 7 crores is adequate? It may not be enough; it may be too much. Meanwhile, the Government of Bengal has undertaken to see that food supplies are got out to the fullest to all the districts wherever transport and distribution arrangements permit, and I believe they are improving. In the absence of that, Sir, will any amount of money or offer of money be of any assistance? Money will not save lives. It is only food that can do this and the Bengal Government have undertaken to see that food gets out. But, meanwhile, until we know what it is costing Bengal and whether Bengal is responsible, I think we here should not commit ourselves to saying that any figure is adequate or inadequate.

*THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR (Madras: Muhammadan): Sir, the Honourable Mover has really made a very strong case for suggesting that some substantial relief must be given to the Bengal Government by the Government of India. Sir, one of the main arguments he advanced for the proposition was that the present calamity which is facing the Bengal Government is not an ordinary thing. It is not an eventuality against which something could have been provided in advance if only the Bengal Government had been in a position to see things beforehand. As he has remarked, the present occasion is an extraordinary one. The distress which is prevailing in Bengal is of a very terrible nature. If not for anything else—there are many reasons why this help should be given—at least the great distress, the terrible sufferings which the people in Bengal are undergoing should induce anybody, and much more than anybody, the Government of India, to come to the rescue of the Bengal Government. From what the Premier of the Bengal Government said the other day at a public meeting in Delhi under the auspices of the All-India Muslim League Council it is quite apparent that the Bengal Government is now doing the utmost it can. He has made it perfectly clear that a large number of free kitchens have been started there and there is great need for many more free kitchens to be opened. He has stated also that more than these free kitchens there is need also for opening cheap grain shops. As you know, Sir, cheap grain shops are as important as gruel kitchens where the people are fed free, because cheap grain shops would help that part of the population that refuses to be fed free. Most of the people who have visited Bengal in response to a humanitarian call have opined that the greatest part of the distress is among the lower middle class people, the people who had parted with everything that they had, people who had lost everything they had on account of the floods. Those people are now without the least wherewithal to provide themelves with the food that they need and on account of their self-respect they would not go and make an exhibition of their poverty. They deserve help even more than the people who beg. You will have to provide cheap grain shops for them. It is impossible to do all that is needed without financial help. The Premier of Bengal has made it perfectly plain that the expenses which the

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Saiyed Mohamed Padshah Sahib Bahadur.]

Bengal Government is now incurring and have been incurring now are far beyond their resources. They are doing much work and much more yet remains to be done. How is this deficiency in the relief measures to be made up ? Part of it does come from private charity. A substantial portion of it should come from the Government of India because if only the Government of India give an indication to the people in the country that the Bengal Government have come to the end of their resources and that is the reason why they themselves have been induced to part with some amount of money to give relief to the Bengal Government it would induce charitable people in the country also to come forward with more funds. Even without this inducement and help, the charitable instinct that inspires the Orientals, Indians, has come out and has been responsible for much of the relief work that is being done. That is not quite enough and much more has yet to be done. To give an illustration, I would just mention one thing that the Premier has said. The Premier says that there are a number of orphans, a number of females who have been deserted by their husbands, who have lost their protectors, a number of children who have lost their parents or their protectors, who have got to be taken care of ; they have to be provided with houses and food and these people will have to be kept in the orphanages for years to come. How all this is going to be done unless some financial help is going to be given. It is not merely the expenses that will have to be incurred in the distant future, but the expenses that have to be met for the immediate present. All these things require more resources than those which are now at the command of the Bengal Government. As has been stated by my friend Mr. Hossain Imam some of the causes which have brought about these are those for which the Government of India must be responsible. I do not say that the Government of India has deliberately done this as the Honourable the Mover has hinted ; but many of the things which they were forced to do have contributed to this great suffering in Bengal. The destruction of boats in some parts of Bengal has gone to cripple transport facilities there and to aggravate the suffering there and for this it is the Government of India that is responsible. They have no doubt done it with the best of motives at a time when there was the fear of invasion last year ; but whatever the justification for it the thing is there. It is therefore the duty of the Government of India to see to it that those consequenes which have been brought about by its action are redressed. All this, as the Honourable Mover has said, is due to war. The fact that supplies from Calcutta have been cut off has also contributed to this thing. Taking all this into account it seems perfectly just and fair that the Government of India must at once come to the rescue of the Bengal Government. Some of our friends who expressed their sympathy with the people of Bengal objected to the suggestion for some reason or other. My Honourable friend from the European Group said we will not be justified in putting down the figure at 7 crores only. We do not know whether the help that the Bengal Government needs is more than this sum or less than this sum. What I submit is that from all the accounts that we have, we consider that 7 crores is not more than what the Bengal Government needs. If we find that 7 crores is not enough, let us start with 7 crores now and make it the first instalment and if Bengal needs more and the Government of India is in a position to spare more, we will only welcome the Government of India giving another instalment of a few more crores. But for the present let us not waste time by trying to know what is the exact amount that the Bengal Government needs, but make good the deficiency by giving to the Bengal Government the sum of money that the Resolution suggests.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY (East Bengal: Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I rise to support this Resolution but not from the point of view of the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam. I have always been urging that famine should be declared in the various tracts of India where there is a failure of crop and that the Government should take upon itself the responsibility of declaring famine and granting famine relief. It is an All-India question. Famines have appeared in parts of Madras Presidency, in Cochin, Travancore and Bengal. So the Government of India should take upon itself the duty of feeding the people instead of handing over the responsibility to the Provincial Governments as is being done now. The Provincial Governments are not in a position to do it without the

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

help of the Central Government and the other Provincial Governments and people are dying in thousands while the Central Government and the Provincial Governments are merely deliberating, which would not save people. I, therefore, urge that the Government of India should take upon itself the responsibility of feeding all peoples in the various parts of India by whatever means it can command. I therefore support this Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Do you agree that we should adjourn now and hear you after lunch?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES (Finance Secretary): I am quite agreeable. Just as you wish, Sir.

The Council then adjourned till Quarter to Three of the Clock.

The Council reassembled after Lunch at a Quarter to Three of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: Sir, I feel that it should be unnecessary, and yet in view of some of the remarks in this morning's discussion I feel that it is necessary, for me to say that not only the Government of India but every Member of the Government of India and every official of the Government of India and, I think, every right-thinking man in the country has the sincerest and deepest sympathy with Bengal in her present plight and with those unfortunate people in Bengal who are at present in such a state of distress. And I think our sympathy is none the less real because we realise that this distress in the province of Bengal is fortunately not province-wide but is to a certain extent localized. I would go further and say that it in no way detracts from the sincerity of our sympathy if we refuse to allow that sympathy to cloud issues or to make us lose our sense of proportion.

The Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam denies the possibility of real sympathy unless it is accompanied by a cash payment. He calls it lip-sympathy—something of no value. Sir, it puzzles and pains me that a gentleman like the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam, to whom religion is such a real and vital thing that it colours a majority of the questions that he asks on the floor of this House, can take so materialistic a view. For myself, Sir, I cannot accept such a view.

In opening the moving of his Resolution, the Honourable Mover started to analyse the causes of the present situation in Bengal. I do not propose to traverse that ground, Sir, although I was very tempted to utilise actual figures to throw some of the causes that he mentioned into a proper perspective. I do not propose to deal with the question of the causes of and the responsibility for the present situation, because I feel that it is not really relevant to this Resolution, which deals with a purely financial issue. The Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam said that the situation in Bengal could not be dealt with without financial help. I am prepared to agree that this may be so. I cannot give a firm answer, because the experiment really has not been seriously tried. Help has been asked for, and help has been given. But the Honourable Member goes further than this, and he says that the situation cannot be dealt with unless the Government of India transfer outright as a subsidy a sum of at least seven crores of rupees. I would submit to this Honourable House that the Honourable Mover at least left that claim unproven.

Now, what is Bengal's real problem at the present time, expressed in real terms? It is to secure an adequate supply of foodgrains in the places where it is required for feeding a population which is short of food; in other words, procurement of food, combined with speedy and equitable distribution. That, Sir, is not a financial issue; it is a supply and administrative problem, and money considerations go into the solving of that problem only so far as money is necessary to the procurement of the food that is required by the people. And I claim here, before this House, that where money was required money has been provided, and that so far as our information goes Bengal's activities in the matter of supply and distribution of food have never been held up for want of funds. In other words, so far as the Government of India are aware, not a single person in Bengal has died, not a single person in Bengal has gone short of a meal because the Government of Bengal, wishing to provide that food, had not had the money to provide it.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: But they had no wish!

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: Bengal's requests to us have come from time to time for placing funds at their disposal to enable them to purchase foodgrains—wheat, millets and rice—and those requests have been complied with. I should perhaps add one caveat to that, and that is that we have consistently and throughout pressed upon the Government of Bengal that, in the interests of the province, in the interests of its people and in the interests of the whole of India, in the matter of procurement of foodgrains on a large scale it was up to Bengal to use trade and market finance to the maximum possible extent. In so far as Bengal has not been in a position herself to raise the funds that she required, we have advanced the money that was necessary. The reason for our taking that line this House will fully appreciate, I am certain, because we have had many discussions here on the monetary situation in the country. We felt that it would contribute to a definitely inflationary sentiment in Bengal if we simply went on pumping new money into that province, in certain areas of which money is abounding, without the Government of Bengal making such efforts as it could to raise money within its limits and use the money so raised for the purposes of securing foodgrains. We have taken that line, and we will continue to take that line with ever increasing insistence. The reason why we have not taken it more strongly in the past is that Bengal, faced as she has been with numerous and insistent difficulties, was generally not in a position to plan her requirements far ahead, and her requests thus came to us at very short notice when we had no time to argue, and we had immediately to place the funds required at Bengal's disposal. The figures of the advances so made have been given to the House this morning: for general ways and means purposes, Rs. 3 crores; for purchase of foodgrains, Rs. 7 crores—all within the last six months. And previous to that we had already given a ways and means advance of Rs. 2½ crores. So that, Bengal has received from us a matter of about Rs. 12½ crores, Rs. 11½ crores of which was actually drawn, out of which Rs. 11 crore is still outstanding and Rs. ½ crore has been paid back.

Now we come to the question of grant versus loan, which is the essence of this Resolution. This question, Sir, to my mind is irrelevant so far as a solution of Bengal's real problem is concerned, for the reasons that I have already given. But apart from that, this question of outright assistance in the form of a subsidy raises very much wider issues and far different considerations than a mere solving of Bengal's immediate problem. Honourable Members are aware that in 1937 was introduced a system of provincial autonomy. They are also aware that a very vital part of provincial autonomy was financial autonomy. This financial autonomy was intended by the framers of the Constitution Act to be a real thing,—in fact so real that the stability of the financial credit of a Province was not included among the special responsibilities of a Governor of a Province. It was intended that it should be a very real thing and that the responsibility for Provincial finances should rest fair and square on the shoulders of the autonomous Provincial Governments. What the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam fails to realise, I think, is that in the last six years, Provinces have grown up. They have become adults. They are expected to look after their own monetary affairs. The suggestion that when a Province is faced with exceptional difficulties she should immediately rush to the Centre for financial assistance seems to me entirely foreign to that conception. You may say that the Constitution has not given Provinces sufficiently elastic resources to face up to their responsibilities. That, Sir, is a matter of opinion. But it seems to me that even if that were made out, the remedy would be not to leave a responsibility with the Provinces and the financial resources with the Centre but to readjust financial resources to correspond to the division of responsibilities. But, as a matter of fact, Provinces have been given a far greater elasticity of resources than many people have yet realised. For instance, the sales tax is a fiscal instrument of great value and scope. It was first explored by the Government of Madras under Mr. Rajagopalachari's Government and I venture to think that the Province of Madras could still teach the Province of Bengal many things about how to secure a maximisation of revenue from the sales tax. Similarly is the question of agricultural income-tax. In the case of a Province like Bengal that is a fiscal instrument of great possibilities. I am

glad to say that the Province of Bengal is now realising its potentialities and is taking action to develop those resources, now that she finds that her responsibilities are proving onerous in comparison with her existing resources. But the fact remains that Provinces have grown up, there is such a thing as financial autonomy of the Provinces which is, and was intended to be, a very real thing. Financial autonomy means that the Provinces, as far as they can, should learn to face up to their own difficulties. A famine, however, painful and however sad a thing it may be when it happens, is unfortunately nothing unusual in this country. Madras has a famine almost always in certain of its districts. It is also frequently subject to cyclones and floods. Bihar has been afflicted by an earthquake. Sind only last year—little more than 12 months ago—was subject to devastating floods which involved great liabilities in the matter of rehabilitation of whole districts and the rebuilding of villages and re-settlement of agriculturists. Punjab not very long ago was spending crores of rupees on fighting a wide-spread famine. These are incidents unfortunately which are by no means uncommon in India, and they are among the burdens and the problems that fall to the Provinces to be tackled. If we start giving financial relief in the form of a gift to every Provincial Government whenever it is faced with a natural calamity of this sort, the question will naturally arise as to where we are to stop. It is very difficult to give in one case unless we give in all, and that strikes at the very root of the present constitutional position as I have endeavoured briefly to outline.

One Honourable Member remarked that the Honourable Mover of the Resolution had given no indication whatsoever as to how he happened to hit upon Rs. 7 crores as the figure for the minimum financial relief considered necessary for the Province of Bengal. I myself have been wondering the same thing. I had hoped for enlightenment from his speech but his speech contained no reference to the amount whatsoever. I have a shrewd suspicion that it works out something like this. Honourable Members will remember that when provincial autonomy was inaugurated, Sir Otto Neimeyer conducted an inquiry as to what arrangements were necessary to start the Provinces off on an even keel and with resources sufficient to keep them going under the new regime. Those recommendations were embodied in an Order in Council. Under that arrangement Bengal secured the cancellation of its debts to the Central Government over and above those which were automatically cancelled by a transfer to it of deposit liabilities relating to Bengal. By that, Bengal secured a relief of some 2 crores of debt. In addition, Bengal got 20 per cent. of the provincial share of income-tax under the arrangements which were then introduced, and also her share (which was the greater part) of the extra 12½ per cent. jute export duty which was allotted to the jute producing provinces. Under these arrangements, 6 years have elapsed from the 1st April, 1937 to the 31st March, 1943 and during those six years the result of the working of financial autonomy in Bengal is that, after debiting to revenue some ½ crore of capital expenditure on account of commutation of pensions, Bengal has worked to a net surplus of Rs. 9 lakhs; *i.e.*, in the first six years of provincial autonomy, Bengal has had a progressive revenue surplus of something like Rs. 60 lakhs, reduced to Rs. 9 lakhs after allowing for the debit to revenue of certain capital expenditure. The latest Bengal budget framed and introduced only recently due to a change of Government and to certain constitutional technical difficulties, showed an anticipated deficit during the current year of some Rs. 7 crores. I would ask Honourable Members to realise the position. The current year will be the first year since provincial autonomy was introduced that Bengal's progressive revenue working has shown a deficit, and what the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam says is that this deficit should be met by the promise of a grant from the Central Government as soon as it has arisen—almost before it has arisen, because the figure of Rs. 7 crores is only a budget estimate and we yet do not know what the financial result of the present year's working will eventually turn out to be. Sir, I do not wish nor am I in a position at this stage to offer any definite opinion on the necessity or otherwise of a grant to Bengal. The position in Bengal is still one of acute difficulty. The problem is to get on with the job and we do not yet know what the financial effect of this catastrophe will be on Bengal's finances. But I can say this, that in the circumstances it is altogether premature to come forward and suggest that the Central Government should, here and now, step into the breach and undertake to meet this the first progressive deficit of the

[Mr. C. E. Jones.]

Province of Bengal in the whole of its existence as a Provincial autonomous unit just so soon as it is anticipated that the deficit will arise. As I say, I wish to offer no opinion on the merits, since the position is not yet known. I hope the Honourable Mover will not press his Resolution, because although for the reasons I have given we cannot accept this Resolution, we have on the other and no wish to oppose it at this stage. The position is not clear and I think the better course will be to leave it at that.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Mr. President, I am grateful to the Honourable the Finance Secretary for what he has said in concluding his speech. Although there is no definite promise, yet there is a definite statement that they are not averse to the idea if the necessity is shown. What he questions—and I think somewhat correctly—is that the necessity has not been substantiated. I may, say, Sir, that a non-official coming from another part of the country than Bengal could not have very easily substantiated the claims. It is really the duty of the Government of Bengal to substantiate its claim and make out a case for the held from the Central Government and I think they are quite capable of fighting out with the Centre if the need be. But I would remind the Honourable the Finance Secretary that he referred to the Bihar earthquake. At that time the Government did come forward with certain help.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: I realise that.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I have refreshed my memory by reference to the proceedings of the Council of State. The Finance Member was generous enough to promise certain help—interest-free advances, loans and free grants to public bodies, etc. I have not been able to total up the amounts, but it was a fairly good sum which even this Government did make to a province in its distress. My only contention, and the reason why I brought forward this Resolution is that Bengal's calamity is not an ordinary day to day affair and I would be satisfied if I succeed in convincing not only the Government of India but the higher and mightier people at Whitehall that this calls for special attention of His Majesty's Government as well as of the Government of India.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You mean the Bengal situation?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Yes.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Honourable Sir A. P. Patro put in a plea on behalf of Madras too.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Mr. President, I should have thought that the proper course for my Honourable frineds would have been to move an amendment that in addition to 7 crores, 50 lakhs be given to the Ceded Districts and 20 lakhs to Malabar and 10 lakhs to other places—

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS (Nominated Non-official): It is very gracious? You want crores and we want only lakhs.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: One province after another will come without facts and figures and—

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Do I correctly understand that the present contention of the Government of India as interpreted by you is that Indian provinces will always have calamities like this so long as the British connection lasts? Is this the implication that this sort of thing will continue to happen all the time? I shudder at the prospect of the British Empire. I thought that we have to face it once in a long time, not that it will become an ordinary course of business coming every year. If this is the prospect of the British Empire—

*THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: May I remind you that Mr. Jones said that famine is not a new thing or an extraordinary thing.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Order, order. You have not asked for my permission to interrupt. Will you please proceed, Mr. Hossain Imam.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Sir Parasuram told me that I could discuss this with the Food discussion, but his entire speech was devoted to a discussion of the food problems of other provinces. That was a gratuitous remark without facts and figures to say that the Bengal Government was mismanaged, that Bengal's calamity is no greater than that of the other parts to which he referred.

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member

I do not wish to compare the calamity. Because I am suffering I should not ask others to suffer. I would rather try to get my own suffering removed and after that I would also like to remove the suffering of others. Speeches like that of Sir Parasuram Patro are great consolations to the uneasy conscience of the Government that they have got some champion who will take up their cause better than they themselves want to.

I will now return to Mr. Jones' speech. First of all he gave us an assurance of the sympathy not only of his own Department but of the entire Government of India and I am grateful for that. Then he went on to say—and I think rightly—that I want the sympathy to be translated into action. My criteria of financial help was this. The Bengal Government has done something to relieve the distress, but that something is not enough and more is required to be done and I placed a straight question before the Finance Secretary whether he is satisfied that no further relief is required.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: I would point out that that is a matter entirely within the discretion of the Provincial Government and it is not for the Government of India to say whether the scale of relief which that Government decide to accord is adequate or not.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Officially they might not express an opinion, but I do feel that they must have come to some conclusions whether more relief could not be fruitfully and usefully given to that stricken people. He recounted to us the help which the Government of India has given, the generous help of giving advances. I think the Indian public has been more generous to the Government of India in the matter of advancing money at cheap rates of interest for carrying on this war. Is that all the generosity which I expect from the Central Government? Ways and means advances are being given to the Government of India itself by the Reserve Bank at cheap rates.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Is it right to confuse the war question with this question at all?

THE HONOURABLE MR HOSSAIN IMAM: I am referring to the financial help and the relief which they have given. They took some credit for giving us money at a cheap rate of interest. There is no cheap rate of interest. The accommodation which the Finance Secretary has got——

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: The Honourable Member speaks without his facts when he says that there is no cheap rate of interest. The biggest advance we gave to the Government of Bengal was 4 crores at a rate of one half per cent. per annum.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Do you consider that an excessive rate?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I do not consider that an excessive rate but it is about the same rate which the Honourable the Finance Member gets from the Reserve Bank. Does he get it at more than 1½ per cent. from the Reserve Bank?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: I said ½ per cent.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: That is cheap enough. I thought it was 1½ per cent.

The Treasury bills are treated at 13 annas per hundred so that it is not much of a relief.

Then he referred to the financial autonomy and he rightly expressed the fear that poor Bengal has been given an inelastic source of revenue and he rightly stressed, Sir, that that is a bigger question in which we cannot enter at the present moment, but when he shifted his ground and tried to take shelter behind the Dawes Settlement to get out of his present commitments I think he was not doing full justice to the Bengal question. My only point all along has been that this trouble of Bengal is not a perennial trouble that you should not expect that this thing should go on recurring year after year and that it is the peculiar circumstances of the war which have brought about it. If there were no war we would have no shipping difficulties and foodgrains could have come into India easily enough in much larger quantities than we have asked the railway authorities to transport and that would have brought down prices. A competitive economy which exists in the ordinary times is itself a

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

guarantee of having fair prices but in the special circumstances of the war when there is no trade left, when shipping is not available, I do feel, Sir, that the Government of India cannot take shelter behind a peace time ordinary provision which existed, and which rightly existed, that Provinces should not look to the Centre for their relief, but, as I have pointed out, Sir, the Government of India once deviated before in the matter of the Bihar earthquake and it did give some handsome help to us. I do still hope that when the proper time comes the Government of India will not be as stone-hearted as it has shown itself to be. I hope the reality is better than its face. Sir, I do not wish to press the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Under these circumstances I will not read to you the Resolution again, Honourable Members. Is it your wish that leave be granted to the Honourable Member to withdraw his Resolution.

(Honourable Members indicated their assent.)

The Resolution was, with the permission of the Council, withdrawn.

RESOLUTION *RE* A RECONSTRUCTION RESERVE FUND.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I desire to move the following Resolution:—

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to build up a reconstruction reserve fund for (*a*) educational expansion and development and (*b*) public health improvement and development, the fund to be available for both the centrally administered areas and the Provinces."

Sir, I feel that no argument is necessary to prove the importance to the nation of public health development and educational expansion and development. A people who aspire after national greatness cannot do with the second best in public health and education; they are vital for social security and, if I may say so, the case for a rapid development of the social services could not have been put better than it was by the present Viceroy, Lord Wavell, in the farewell speeches which he made before leaving for India. In one of those speeches, Sir,—I have not got the speech before me but I will just give the gist of it—in one of those speeches he said that vast sums of money were being spent on war and he thought that the problems of peace were just as important as the problems of war and that nations and particularly India should spend a great deal more than she had done over education, public health and the other social services. He visualised in his speech a great expansion of these nation-building activities in the post-war era.

Sir, the men who are in the fighting line and the men who are making sacrifices for the war have a right to expect that they shall live under better conditions in the post-war world than they have hitherto lived in. Therefore, the first point that I would stress is that both educational expansion and development and public health development and expansion should be looked upon as part of war activity itself. Now, Sir, we know what the constitutional position in regard to public health and education is. Public health and education are essentially provincial subjects, but the Centre has got to deal with the centrally administered areas. If we examine the Government of India Act we shall find that in a certain class of cases it can legislate both for education and public health but primarily its functions are those of advice and co-ordination. The Centre's powers in regard to education and public health are much the same as those it has in regard to agriculture. Now, we know, Sir, as a matter of fact that the Centre is contributing something towards agricultural development and we know that when Sir James Grigg was Finance Member we had a number of criticisms—we did not like his ways then and we do not like his ways now—but when Sir James Grigg was Finance Member, we know he used to give grants for purposes of what he used to call rural reconstruction. Therefore, what I would say is that there should be no difficulty, in accepting the principal of my Resolution. I think the principle of my Resolution, the principle that the Centre should help the provinces and the centrally administered areas with grants, recurring and non-recurring, should find acceptance from all sides of the House. There should be no difficulty so far as the acceptance of that principle is concerned.

At the Centre we have two important Central Advisory Boards. We have the Central Advisory Board of Public Health, and we have the Central Advisory Board of Education. Both these Boards have done valuable work during the last five years. If Honourable Members will care to go through the reports of these Boards, they will find much material which is of value in them. There fore, Sir, I think it ought to be our endeavour to further the activities of these Boards. And those activities cannot be furthered wihout financial assistance.

I may say that I am more concerned at the moment with the acceptance of the principle than with the working out of the details of the principle I wish the Council to accept. I have therefore deliberately not indicated in my Resolution what the extent of this reconstruction reserve fund should be. In fact, having regard to the inadequate data that I have before me, I should not have been justified in suggesting any concrete or actual figure. Those figures will have to be worked out by Departments of Government in consultation with the Provincial Governments and with other bodies.

Sir, I do not propose also, for the very simple reason that I am not a financier, to suggest to the Honourable Mr. Jones how this reconstruction fund should be built up. Whether any part of our sterling resources should be utilised for building up this fund or whether we should float loans in the market at this time for building up this reconstruction fund, is a question on which I do not wish to dilate. I should personally indicate my preference for raising of loans for the purpose of building up a reconstruction fund. Incidentally, if we withdraw some money from the market, it may also to some extent help us solve the problem of inflation.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Am I to understand that the Honourable Member wants these activities started at once?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: I should certainly like to plan for the future—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You want plans to be made now? Or do you want actual finance to be found now?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: I should like the principle of the reconstruction fund to be accepted, and I should like Government—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I do not think Government will deny that the principle is good.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: I should like them to build up this reconstruction fund. I am not indicating exactly what the figure of that reconstruction fund should be; that will depend upon the financial circumstances, and upon many other circumstances.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You are fully aware that in other countries plans have been made, but they have not started to build up reserve funds.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: I am not going to ignore that point. I will not argue the case for the expansion of these activities; I shall take it for granted. You, Sir, raised the question of plans. The House knows that Government has recently appointed a Public Health Committee. The terms of reference of that Committee are very wide and comprehensive. It is to deal both with the curative and the preventive side of medicine. And prevention in this country is in some respects even more important than cure. As a matter of fact, there is very little distinction today between curative and preventive medicine. Our object should be to prevent, rather than cure, disease, and if we are to have any health organisation of value to the country, it is clear that we shall need vast sums for improving and strengthening our health organisations.

I shall just say a few words about the present state of public health in the country. The Bengal famine, if I may just refer to it, will leave the people of that area very much devitalized. Apart from this famine which is menacing us today, we have in the country an actual shortage of doctors. We have about 42,000 doctors all over India. That is to say, we have one doctor to every 10,000 people. In England the number of doctors to the population is one doctor to every 1,000 people.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: During the present period?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: We are living in abnormal conditions. You, Sir, seem to imagine that everything the British Government has done in this country from the date it came here is most wonderful—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I do not say anything of the sort. I wanted to know from you whether you say that the position in England today is that there is one doctor to every one thousand people—whether that is the position today, during the war period.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: This is the position in normal times. And I am discussing the question from the normal point of view. I am not taking abnormal conditions into account at all. When I say that we have 42,000 doctors in India, I am referring to the India of the pre-war days.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH (Education, Health and Lands Member): I think it is true even today.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: You mean that 42, 000 is the number of doctors in India today? But a number of them have been enlisted in the Army, and the figure cannot be, if I am right, in the neighbourhood of 42,000; it is less than 42,000 today. What the exact figure is I cannot say, but it is certainly not 42,000.

Anyway, that means that we have one doctor to every 10,000 people. There is, moreover, bad distribution of these doctors. I mean, most of them, the great majority of them, live in urban areas, and so far as rural areas are concerned, these areas have to do, generally speaking, without scientific medicine. They have to depend for treatment upon hakims and vaids, and in some cases upon unqualified homoeopaths. If you take the nursing position, you will find that it is even worse than the position in regard to doctors. The number is very much less than what is needed and our hospitals are inadequately staffed with nurses. As regards the nursing position, the Director General of the Indian Medical Services says that calculated on a reasonable basis of one nurse for four beds, the number of nurses required for the number of beds in British India in 1937, should be 16,420or almost double the number now employed. Now, Sir, if we take the vital statistics; we shall find that India has almost the highest mortality rate. The death rate in 1937—I am giving you the figures for 1937—in the various countries was as follows:—

New Zealand	9·1	France .	15
Australia	9·4	Japan .	17
South Africa	10·4	Java .	18·8
Canada	10·2	Palestine .	18·9
U. S. A.	11·2	Federated Malay States	19·9
Germany	11·7	Ceylon .	21·7
England	12·4	British India	22·4
Italy .	14·2		

The only countries which had a higher death rate than India were the Straits Settlements, 22·5, and Egypt, 27·2. Take again, Sir, the expectation of life in this country and compare it with that of other countries. The figures are as follows:—

	Males.	Females.		Males.	Females.
New Zealand	65·4	67·88	Germany .	59·86	62·75
Australia	63·48	(not given).	England .	58·74	62·38
South Africa .	57·78	61·48	France .	53·76	56
Canada .	59·32	61·59	Japan .	44·82	46·54
U. S. A. .	59·12	62·67	India .	26·91	26·56

Thus, Sir, the expectation of life in this country is in the neighbourhood of 26 years. That shows that we have about the smallest expectation of life in the civilised world.

Then, Sir, we know that our medical organisation is very defective. I could give you the number of hospitals in the various Provinces and the figures of population that they serve. I will not go into all these details because I think the House will agree with me that the state of public health is, due to a number of causes, deplorably low. We have sadly neglected it in the past. Adequate funds have not been provided for expansion of public health activities by the State. Public heath has been looked upon as the Cinderella of Government Departments. The social habits of the people also are not what they should be and little has been done by means of education and propaganda to improve their social outlook. Therefore, Sir, vast sums of money will be needed if we are to build up a healthy public health organisation in this country and the health of a country is its greatest asset. If its people are not strong and virile, if they are under-fed, if they suffer from malnutrition, they will fall victims to famine, disease and epidemics. They will be

a source of danger not only to India but also to the world at large, because disease travels, and with the development of civil aviation, with the world getting closer, the danger of disease spreading from India to other countries will also become increasingly greater. Our industrial and agricultural efficiency will suffer also because they depend upon good nutrition and you cannot have good nutrition unless you have a higher standard of living. You cannot have a higher standard of living unless you have a more vigorous body. It is a vicious circle but you have got to break that circle. It is from that point of view of paramount importance that the subject of public health should receive adequate consideration in the post-war period. I, therefore, suggest that we should utilise this opportunity of building up a fund for post-war public health development.

I will now just say a few words about education. I understand that the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, Mr. John Sargent, has submitted a memorandum on education to the Central Advisory Board of Education. The full text of that memorandum has not been published but parts of it were allowed to see the light of day and, if I may say so, it is in many respects an admirable memorandum. It shows that Mr. Sargent has brought to bear upon his task a liberal outlook. He is not one of those who is afraid of expanding education. As a matter of fact, if you want any kind of democracy to function in this country—and I say any kind of democracy because I do not know what kind of democracy my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam believes in—I know what kind of democracy I believe in—

* THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan) : Indigenous.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU :— whether it is indigenous or whether it is British or whether it is Swedish or American whatever be the kind of democracy that you believe in, that democracy must have an educated electorate. It must have an electorate trained to discharge its responsibility in the functions of citizenship, trained to understand the issues that come up before a democratic electorate. Therefore from the point of view of Indian independence, from the point of view of the democratic development of this country, the question of education has assumed a vast importance. We wish, Sir, to have nursery schools. We wish to have primary education up to at least the age of 14. In England they are now thinking in terms of 16 and even for the matter of that of 18. We are thinking of the pre-war England. We want to reach the standard, at any rate, which pre-war England had reached. We want our boys and girls to begin their education at the age of 5 or 6 and go up to the age of 14 and there should be free and compulsory education for those boys and girls. We want a certain number of them to be enabled by the State by a generous system of scholarships to proceed to higher secondary education and we want at least a fifth of our population, at least 20 per cent. of our population, or 30 per cent. of our population to receive the benefits of higher secondary education and we must reconstruct this higher secondary education. We must make it self-sufficient. We must have a system of vocational education. At the end of the higher secondary stage it should be possible for a young man to join vocational institutions. If he has got an aptitude for University education it should be possible for him, even though he may be very poor, to proceed to higher University education. We want different types of experiments to be tried in our Universities, residential, teaching Unitary, Federal and Affiliating Types ; all these types should be tried here to suit the genius of the various types of population we have in this country. We want big research institutions, technological institutions ; we want our professional education to be improved, our medical education to be improved ; we want greater facilities to be placed so far as research is concerned. Industrial prosperity, even agricultural prosperity, depends upon research. We want greater research facilities to be placed within reach of our young men. If we are to attempt this task of social security, social security can be secured either in a direct manner or it can be secured in an indirect manner. If we want to have any social security in this country we must have a very considerable expansion of educational activity. If you have any

* Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Mr. P. N. Sapru.]

considerable expansion of educational activity one advantage that I foresee is that possibly in course of time people will be able to see the communal problem also in its proper perspective. One of the reasons which I think makes for communalism is the backwardness of certain communities in educational matters. If they come up to the same educational standard as other communities, I think they will begin to think that it is not consistent with their dignity to ask that there should be a certain reservation for them in certain services, that their promotion should be determined not by merit but by their race or creed——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Mr. Hossain Imam will not agree.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : But you will agree, Sir.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Has education taught you to be better ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : You belong to a community which is a very small community. It has played a very important part in the development of Indian nationalism. It has played a very important part in the development of Indian commerce and industry. Some of the greatest names in Indian industry have been those of men who belong to your community and your community has never asked for reservations and safeguards and promotion on the ground of your being a Parsee, because it would not pay you to do so. You know that you can compete successfully with peoples of other creeds. You are self-reliant and therefore you do not want to take shelter behind communal cries. Therefore, Sir, I think that from the larger point of view of communal harmony, educational expansion is necessary, because if you have educational development the communal point of view will be seen by people in its proper perspective. They will know exactly what value to attach to those communal cries. From every point of view, from the point of view of India's self-respect, from the point of view of India's past, from the point of view of India's future, from the point of view of the generations unborn, it is essential that there should be a rapid development both of education and public health in the post-war period. The committees that are to do the work cannot do their work properly unless they know exactly what funds will be available to them in the post-war world. They may make recommendations which may be of a visionary character. If we can now know the direction in which the mind of the Government is working, the problem of reconstruction will be to a certain extent facilitated.

Sir, I have spoken at greater length than I had intended to. There is a great deal that one wants to say ; so far as public health is concerned there may be outbreaks of cholera and other epidemics in the post-war world. We are short of medical supplies ; we are short of medical equipment and in all these directions help is necessary and for that purpose it is necessary that the principle of a reconstruction fund which will be available for both the provinces and the centrally administered areas should be accepted by Government. With these words, Sir, I commend this Resolution to the acceptance of the House.

THE HONOURABLE SIR RAMUNNI MENON (Nominated Non-Official) : I think the Honourable Mr. Sapru has done very well by introducing a Resolution of the kind that he has introduced today and thereby giving us an opportunity of ventilating the very important subjects of expansion and improvement of public health and of educational reconstruction in this country. His Resolution deals with two subjects, but I shall confine myself to one of them, namely education, not because I think health unimportant but because I feel I can more usefully and certainly more appropriately address myself to the subject of education. We have all felt for a long time the need of a comprehensive system of national education in this country. During the last few years various schemes relating to important aspects of education have been prepared and approved by appropriate bodies but they have all had to be laid aside for lack of funds. Now a very hopeful sign has appeared in the fact that the Reconstruction Committee of the Viceroy's Executive Council, which is the organisation set up for considering schemes of post-war reconstruction, has expressed its willingness and readiness to consider a scheme for post-war educational reconstruction. The Honourable Mr. Sapru referred to a scheme of educational reconstruction prepared by the Educational Adviser to the

* Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

Government. I think the Honourable Member in charge of Education and the Educational Adviser are entitled to our warm acknowledgment and to our most grateful appreciation for producing a scheme the first time it has been produced, of post-war educational reconstruction for India. The Educational Adviser has prepared an exceptionally comprehensive memorandum which the Central Advisory Board of Education, which met at Dehra Dun last month, had the opportunity to consider. The consideration is not yet complete and when it is completed I am sure that the scheme will be published. It will be regarded as a landmark in the history of education in this country. I do not think it necessary to go into the details of that scheme at present. As a matter of fact, the general features of the scheme have already become public property. There was a press communique which appeared in the papers last month. The statement published in the papers of the 18th October, indicates sufficiently clearly the details of the scheme; but for our present purpose it is not necessary to go into the merits of the scheme. All that one need say is that it is a scheme which is suitable for India and which as far as one could see will be acceptable to the Centre and to the Provinces. I hope it will receive a very sympathetic consideration not only at the hands of the Reconstruction Committee but at the hands of the Government of India. Now the crux of the whole problem is this. Granting that the scheme is sound, how is it going to be put into operation? The Honourable Mr. Sapru expressed his ignorance of the estimated cost of the scheme for educational reconstruction. As a matter of fact this figure is given in the press note to which I have referred. The cost of the scheme of educational reconstruction comes to Rs. 277 crores a year. To the ordinary mind it will appear to be a staggering estimate. But the war has accustomed us to think of income and expenditure on a colossal scale and I do not think that a country with a population of 400 millions can grumble at the prospect of having to spend on the education of its people something of that magnitude. Strictly speaking the estimate of 277 crores is for British India and is therefore for about 300 millions. Now, Sir, it is time that the Government of India either directly or through the medium of some expert Committee began to think of ways and means for financing expensive post-war schemes of this kind. Doubtless there will be other schemes involving expenditure, perhaps not of this magnitude but of a magnitude approaching it. I do not know what the scheme of health expansion will cost. There must be other schemes also and I think it will probably be wise on the part of the Government to set up an expert Committee to consder the question of ways and means. The war has stimulated great expectations not only in the belligerent countries but in countries which are nominally at peace. In this country we entertain very great expectations. Moreover, under the stress of war we have reconciled ourselves to various State controls and to self-sacrifices which it would probably have been difficult for us to reconcile ourselves to in peace time. It seems to me, therefore, taking all these circumstances into consideration that this is the time for launching a vast scheme of national education of the kind that I have indicated. If we are not able to do this now I fear that it will be impossible for this country to embark upon any scheme of the requisite magnitude in the near future. Therefore, whatever our present hardships may be we shall have to be prepared to go through not only the same hardships but greater hardships in order to secure a modicum of benefit for the coming generation.

I was reading the other day an abstract of a White Paper issued by His Majesty's Government, containing their proposals for educational reconstruction in Great Britain. In that White Paper, the following words are given a prominent place :—

"Upon the education of the people of this country the fate of this country depends."

Now I submit that those words apply with special appositeness to this country and I can think of no nobler thought to serve as an inspiration and to act as a stimulus to those who are genuinely anxious to promote the progress and welfare of this country.

4-5 P.M. His Excellency Lord Linlithgow, before he left this country, sent a short message to the meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education. That message was published in the newspapers. I think it will be

[Sir Ramunni Menon.]

relevant for me to quote one sentence from that. His Excellency among other things, said :—

"I was unable, during my Viceroyalty, to inaugurate that broad advance towards the establishment of a national system of education which I had in mind before the war broke out."

Well, I hope it will be possible for the Government of India to complete all the necessary preparations in order to enable the present Viceroy to introduce a scheme of national education before he lays down the reins of office.

With these few words, I heartily endorse the plea which the Honourable Mr. Sapru has made that, Government should build up a reconstruction fund for financing schemes of educational expansion and public health improvement in this country.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL (Bombay : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, I am in entire agreement with the Honourable Mover of the Resolution so far as the spirit of the Resolution is concerned. But in our enthusiasm for building up an educational reserve fund we must not forget the liability that it will incur on our financial position. There is, Sir, a scheme propounded by Mr. Sargent, Educational Commissioner to the Government of India, which will cost, by the time it is fully established at the end of between 40 and 50 years, Rs. 3,13 crores annually, of which Rs. 2,77 crores annually will have to come out of public funds, as against what we are paying today from the public funds, Rs. 17½ crores.

Taxation, Sir, has reached a staggering limit. It has increased by 400 per cent. Cost of living has gone up by 300 per cent. And if we go on evolving schemes of educational expansion, say, for Rs. 300 crores, of public health for Rs. 400 crores, of industrial expansion for Rs. 100 crores, and so on, where are we going to get the money from ? These academic schemes may have propaganda value, but they raise in us only false hopes. We are already taxed to a limit of 93 per cent. That is the maximum limit, and if Government wish to put these fantastic schemes through by taxing us further, I am not for it. But if Government can find other means by which these schemes can be put through, I should certainly be willing to support it.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I should like to know from the Honourable Member to which scheme he would give priority—health or education ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL : It is not a question of preference for one or the other. It is a question of finding out ways and means for securing the necessary funds for these schemes.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I know that. But I would like to have your personal opinion.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL : I do not want to give preference to any scheme in particular.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : But don't you think that the health scheme ought to get priority, because the health of the country must receive first consideration ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL : I personally would put education first. But that is a matter of personal opinion.

THE HONOURABLE LT.-COL. SIR HISSAMUDDIN BAHADUR (Nominated Non-Official) : I agree with the President that health comes first.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL : Thank you.

In England, for instance, a good portion of the excess profits tax is to be refunded, for the building up of industries. Are Government prepared to give us a portion of our excess profits tax for building up a reserve fund for educational expansion ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Should it be given for health, or for education ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL : Both. Are Government prepared to arrange for a portion of our sterling assets to be sent back to this country in gold or silver now or after the war for building up these schemes ? Or are the United Nations in a position to help us after the war with money for such schemes for all the sacrifice which we are making with them, India being a backward country ? Only if any of these or other such propositions are possible could these nation-building schemes be properly built up in this country.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (Bihar : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, I shall hardly take more than two minutes.

I join with my Honourable friend Sir Ramunni Menon in congratulating my Honourable friend Mr. Sapru on having focussed the attention of this House on the question of education and public health. I shall confine myself merely to the question of public health, and there too to the question of malnutrition only. The Honourable Sir Ramunni Menon has dealt at some length the question of education.

Sir, the last speaker wondered where the money was to be found for these schemes. These schemes, when put into effect, have their own productive value. The benefits also go in a circle. So far as the money is concerned, we have still to know what we are going to do with our sterling balances. I think we are the most solvent nation in the world today,—leaving out the United States of America,—only if our debts are paid back. We have got enough money; only it does not lie in our own hands and we cannot get hold of it as and when we want it. So the question of finance does not really come in. It is a question of recovering money from England. But whenever we have money, the first thing to which we want to devote that money to is public health, and the next is education. It does not matter what money we have. If we have ten rupees, we shall spend the ten rupees on public health. So the question of finance is not really a question of any controversy in this matter.

My excuse for taking part in this debate is that my inspiration out of a book that I have with me. I am sorry I got hold of it only a short while ago and cannot therefore say all that it reveals. It is entitled "The Population Problem of India." On pages 74-75 of this book the author deals with the Baroda Census Report for 1931. Instead of trying to use my own language in the matter, I shall just quote very briefly four or five sentences from this book on the question of malnutrition, and I hope that the valuable information contained in these four or five sentences will leave no room for me to make an apology for making a quotation from this book. The Honourable Mover of the Resolution told us about the high death-rate and the low expectancy of life in this country. For that I proceed to quote from this book on the point of malnutrition :—

"It is only to be expected that in a population with such a high death rate and an alarmingly low expectation of life, there must be a large amount of sickness and malnutrition. Regarding sickness, the figures given in the Baroda Census Report for 1931 are very instructive. They show that while in New Zealand and England the daily average number of sick persons per 1,000 inhabitants is 19 and 30 respectively, it is as high as 84 in India. Malaria is almost universally prevalent throughout the greater part of India and it is estimated that one out of every 3·5 deaths in India is due to this cause alone. The number of sufferers from malaria is estimated by the Health Organisation of the League of Nations at about 100 millions. Malaria debilitates where it does not kill and Col. Chopra, I.M.S., has estimated the annual economic loss to the country due to malaria at about Rs. 33 crores."

In Bengal the problem is particularly acute. "Nutrition is", as Col. McCarrison rightly points out in his Foreword to "Food"—a book which though written for children deserves to be read carefully by every Indian—and I may add, every Indian inside the Government of India or outside it—

"The most pressing of all present day problems in India as 'normal nutrition and health cannot be maintained on many of the diets now used by millions of the Indian people.'

Sir John Megaw estimates that 39 per cent. of the population is well nourished, 41 per cent. poorly nourished, and 20 per cent. very badly nourished. Or, in other words, 60 per cent. of the population is suffering from malnutrition."

I merely wanted to emphasise this point of malnutrition. I wanted to emphasise that whatever money or resources may be available to us, we must first devote all the money we have to proper nutrition, the proper building up of the health of the nation, and then only look after the education of the people and after that to anything else.

*THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU (United Provinces Northern : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, I am in general agreement with my Honourable friend Mr. Sapru who has raised a very important issue today. It must have been a pleasure to us all to notice the support that his Resolution has received from all sides of the House. My Honourable friend Mr. Dalal alone has struck a discordant note. In view of the large expenditure involved in carrying out the purpose which the Honourable Mr. Sapru has in view in moving his Resolution, the Honourable Mr. Dalal thinks that his Resolution could only have a propaganda value and that there was a fear that it might raise false hopes. Mr. President, the sums involved in carrying out the reform suggested by my Honourable friend are certainly large. The reconstruction of education alone will, according to the

* Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

scheme recently prepared by the Educational Commissioner to the Government of India, cost about Rs. 2,77 crores. A Committee is sitting to consider the problems relating to the health of the people. What the expenditure recommended by it will be we do not know. But we should not be frightened by the largeness of the figures. The total sum to be spent on education as recommended by Mr. Sargent may appear to be large, but a scheme which serves the needs of 30 crores of people and involving an expenditure of only Rs. 2,77 crores requires an expenditure of less than Rs. 10 per head. Such a scheme cannot be called extravagant and if India is to make that progress to which her human and material resources entitled her, we must shoulder the obligation of making education universal and compulsory in this land. We constantly refer to the poverty of this country and the need, the urgent need, for the development of industries. It is hard for me to understand how we can banish poverty and industrialise the country on sound lines unless the people have received that education which people have had opportunities of receiving in all the industrially advanced countries. People who are thinking at the present time of industrial development and would have us focus our attention on that question practically to the exclusion of other questions involving expenditure are doing themselves no good. They are preparing to build on weak foundations which will be totally unable to bear the weight of the superstructure which they wish to raise. The questions relating to public health are of equal importance with those relating to education. What the condition of the people is at the present time has been forcibly brought to us by the calamity that has befallen Bengal. We shall not learn truly the lesson of that disaster if we do not make up our minds today to raise the standard of living of the people, to increase their power of resistance to all bodily ills and to diversify the occupations which are open to them at the present time. In order to achieve this purpose it will be absolutely necessary for us to have a healthy and educated nation.

Sir, I do not want to discuss the details of the educational expansion that would be required in order to place this country in line with other progressive countries. But it is obvious that apart from primary education, we shall have to have a net work of vocational schools, of schools which will be both educational and technical in character. The countries that we have in view, the countries whose progress we should fight to rival, are already far ahead of us and we have not merely to catch up with them but also to find means to adopt those progressive suggestions which are being made by their educationists in order to make the existing system of education real, and a source of lasting benefit to the people and the nation. Sir, there was a time when figures like those mentioned by my Honourable friend Sir Ramunni Menon would, as he said, have staggered all those connected with Indian public life. But the war has shown to us how we can increase our revenue by crores and crores in spite of our poverty. We have found a large sum of money in connection with the war. Why should we not utilise those resources of which we were formerly unaware or only half aware to raise the standard of education and general welfare among the people at large ? If we are to think that as soon as the war ends all the extra taxation that we have been subjected to should be repealed, undoubtedly it will then be absolutely impossible to carry out any scheme of reconstruction whatsoever. But if the war has made us alive to our responsibility, to the weakness of our position among the nations of the world and created in us a desire to make ourselves as healthy, prosperous and strong as the other nations are, in a word, to raise ourselves from a C-3 nation to a A-1 nation, we must be prepared to make those financial sacrifices without which our nation cannot develop. Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. Sapru did not say one word to suggest that he had in view large schemes of new taxation. I am sure that he in common with us all is looking forward to the time when after the war we shall be able to utilise our national revenue for more productive purposes. With these words, Sir, I heartily support the Resolution. But I should like to say that I am not entirely in favour of the method suggested by him for financing educational and other developments referred to in my Honourable friend's Resolution. My fear is that if a fund is created, however large it may be, Government may set aside 25 or 30 lakhs for education and yet feel that it has done a great thing. We have to guard carefully against that danger. What we have to point out to Government is not any particular method of financing our new needs, those needs on which

the development of the nation depends, but the importance of shouldering the burdens referred to in the Resolution. How that is to be done is a different matter and I do not propose to discuss it just now. But I want to emphasise the point that I have just referred to. No method is of any particular importance. What is needed is the preparation of a comprehensive scheme for raising the general standard of living of the people in all ways. When the scheme has been prepared it will be for the Government of India to consider how it should provide the funds that would be required in order to carry out that scheme within a measurable distance of time, say, within a generation. That will be the responsibility of the Government of India and they must not think that if they accept the particular method suggested by my Honourable friend Mr. Sapru they will have discharged their duty—even though they may place sums at the disposal of the various authorities for the developments dwelt on by Mr. Sapru—they will have discharged their duty and will be entitled to claim credit for their generosity.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH (Member for Education, Health and Lands): Sir, the specific recommendation which the Resolution of my friend the Honourable Mr. Sapru contains refers to the Finance Department and Mr. Jones will speak on behalf of the Government of India. I rise as being in command of Education, Health and Lands to express how happy I feel that the vital problems of equipping our man-power with health and knowledge are receiving the attention of the Members of this House. The more attention this House gives to these problems, the greater would be the pace of progress. It is true that the amounts that may be needed appear large, but there is an old saying which contains a profound truth. Money is but the dust of a man's hand. It is the man who provides money. It is man who gives value to the money. Money is not gold and silver. Money is what the man can produce. And if by giving attention to health and education we increase the efficiency of our workers, there is no reason why our workers should not be equally as productive as workers of other countries of the world. Today we feel that our finances cannot permit our undertaking these large schemes. We are in that position because we have not equipped our man-power either with health or education. The time has come now when we should concentrate on this that we should make our man-power healthy and as efficient as workers in any other part of the world. If we do this, I think the difficulties which we foresee will disappear. As the Honourable Pandit Kunzru pointed out the expenditure on education would not be more than Rs. 10 per head of population, I do believe that our workers are in a position to increase their produce 10 times if they are equipped with education and health. Any money that we spend on education and health is in the nature of a productive capital expenditure, more productive than money we invest in machines, because the most important machine of production is man himself. Sir, let us have courage and I can promise you that I will give you schemes both for production of food and for health and for education comprehensive enough to cover all the fields to which the Honourable Mr. Sapru referred. The memorandum which Mr. Sargent has alrady prepared covers all the educational fields. And it is not only we are planning. Education, even England is occupied in preparing an educational reconstruction programme. More than politics, more than other controversies, our problem is education and health, to increase efficiency of our workers so that our agriculture, our industries, may produce wealth and make available more money for nation-building subjects. It is not only Lord Linlithgow who sent his encouraging message to the Educational Advisory Council, but our new Viceroy Lord Wavell has sent a most inspiring message to the Health Survey Committee in which he has indicated the directions in which the Committee can work. So, I want to say no more than this, that I welcome the Resolution which my Honourable friend has introduced and I would welcome still more if this House at every session that it meets would take up the problems of rural reconstruction, industrial development, education and all the imporatnt subjects which prosperity of the Country depends me. Ghalib has said :—

تنگ دستی اگر نہ ہو غالب
تندرستی ہزار نعمت ہے

We must fight both poverty and ignorance and if we face the problems boldly we are bound to succeed.

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES (Finance Secretary): I find myself for the second time in one day in the unfortunate position of having to answer to a Resolution which I have no desire to oppose and yet am not in a position to accept. The importance of these related subjects of education and public health no man would attempt to deny. The Government of India are themselves very desirous of embarking on a forward policy in promoting the standard of living of the people of this country as soon as conditions permit. As Honourable Members are aware, an organisation has been set up to consider the question of post-war development in all its aspects so as to have plans ready and available, worked out to the smallest detail with their financial implications fully assessed (and in the case of large schemes the financial implications of successive stages worked out in detail), over the whole field, so that as soon as conditions permit the Government of India will be in a position to take quick decisions, rapid decisions, as to which directions to go ahead, how far to go ahead along each, and how exactly the Centre and the Provinces can so utilise their resources as to secure the maximum results within the shortest time possible. We have been asking, more than asking we have been urging, provincial Governments to go ahead on similar lines, to create organisations which will consider these things from the provincial point of view. We have impressed on them the necessity of working out their detailed plans, assessing the financial implications, but especially have we asked them not to restrict or limit their planning operations by considerations of finance for the time being. I think it was the Honourable Mr. Sapru who, in moving this Resolution, said that the planning experts cannot get on with their business, cannot do their job, unless they know how much money they will have to spend on their schemes after the war. With that view, Sir, the Government of India emphatically and definitely dissents. If that view had prevailed I am perfectly certain that Mr. Sargent would not have produced his report. If, however, we can get the planning along all possible lines of advancement worked out in detail and their financial implications assessed, then, when we are in a position to say what materials can be released, what materials can be obtained, how much money can be spent, then we can decide how to go ahead, in which directions to go ahead and how far in each particular direction. But I must, at the very outset stress the point that the two subjects of education and public health, important though they are, are but two facets of this whole reconstruction problem. The problem is indeed a many-sided one. In the first place, there is the obligation of honour and the inescapable duty of the Governments in this country to provide for the re-settlement and re-employment of ex-Service personnel, demobilised Army workers and so on. That in itself is a vast and complicated question. We do not know how much it will cost and what are the financial burdens that it will mean, but we and the Provincial Governments are investigating it as rapidly as possible. Apart from that, Sir, there are many aspects of reconstruction. The Honourable Mr. Kunzru, with whose views I find myself in very close agreement, in his concluding remarks referred to a comprehensive programme designed to raise the standard of living in this country. What are the various aspects of such a programme? First of all, there is the improvement of agriculture. That itself has a number of different aspects. There is its improvement intensively by the wider manufacture of fertilizers, the use of improved seeds, research and so on. There is the improvement of agriculture extensively by the execution of irrigation works both large projects and smaller other works such as the tube-wells of the U.P. Then connected with that, allied with that, but going much further, there is the question of the development of cheap electric power supply which some people say is a vital need for any material improvement of this country. There is the question of improvement of communications of all types—road, rail, water, air (civil aviation)—and some people attach the very greatest significance for the improvement of living conditions in the rural areas to the development of village roads. Then, again, there is the very large question of the rehabilitation and the expansion of industry to which political elements in this country attach the highest and the first importance. The development of industry covers both large scale and small scale industries. All such measures are calculated, in my opinion, in so far as we can push them forward, to add within a reasonably short time to the improvement of the material welfare of the people of this country. Then we have the social services, of which education and public health are the chief, which will have what you might call a long term effect.

Now the course of the debate this afternoon has shown that opinions differ as to the relative priorities which should be attached to these various activities. Some will argue, as has been argued this morning, that unless you first raise the standard of health of the people it is idle to carry out other plans for their benefit. Others will argue that the first task should be to adopt the quickest method of improving their material welfare, *viz.* by improving productivity, so as to fit them to enjoy the other benefits, which will at the same time improve the taxable capacity of the country to enable it to bear the heavy burdens of the social services. That is a matter on which, possibly unanimous opinion will never be arrived at. But certainly it is a matter on which no opinion can be arrived at until you have before you something like a complete picture of all possible reconstruction development schemes.

The one point I omitted to mention about all these schemes, barring the first, is that they all fall within the provincial field ; and it is essentially a matter for the Provincial Governments to judge as between these various schemes, in so far as they relate to their local areas, what relative priorities should be assigned with reference to their local conditions and requirements and having regard to possible rates of advance in the light of possible available resources. I have no doubt that the views of Provincial Governments on these aspects will weigh very considerably with the Central Government when the Central Government starts to exercise its powers of co-ordination of the various schemes.

That, Sir, is the general picture of what the Central Government is trying to work to in respect of post-war reconstruction. But now I would like to say something about the financial approach to this question which is embodied in the Resolution before us. The one feature which is common to these two great social services of education and public health is that schemes of development, to be anything like adequate to the needs of the country, must necessarily involve very heavy expenditure ; and not only heavy expenditure, but expenditure which must necessarily be mainly of a recurring nature. That is, the expenditure involved, once the schemes are started, will be heavy every year and year after year, because the initial or non-recurring expenditure is bound necessarily to be very small compared with the annual recurring burden which these schemes will impose. For this reason, I would submit that the suggestion to build up a reconstruction fund for financing schemes of this nature is largely without meaning. There would be very little object in building up a concrete, physical but necessarily limited fund to provide for a scheme which will exhaust that fund within a matter of a few years and then leave you high and dry, without having built up your recurring annual revenue to meet the recurring annual expenditure involved in the scheme.

From another point of view, too, the question of building up a fund as suggested is largely meaningless in present circumstances. The House is aware that we are at war ; that our war expenditure is extremely heavy ; that we are working to substantial deficits ; that we have no chance, in present circumstances, of making allocations from revenue to these funds ; that we have no surpluses on revenue account which we can devote to these funds ; and that therefore the only possibility of having anything that could reasonably approximate in form even to a fund would be by borrowing money for the purpose. The House is also aware that we are running savings drives and investment drives for all that we are worth, and every rupee of loan money that we can raise we are already taking off the country for the benefit of our finances at the present time. There is thus the obvious difficulty that when one's finances are as severely strained as they are now, it is not possible to build up in advance a fund for any purpose, however good that purpose may be. That is apart from the technical difficulties that if we started borrowing for this particular purpose we should have to decide how much to borrow for that particular purpose how much we could borrow having regard to market conditions, and how much we should borrow having regard to requirements for development in other directions. Then, again what should be the size of the fund ; what should be the period of the loan—whether we should try to raise 20-year money or 50-year money ; on what terms we could raise it ; on what security the loan would be given. These questions, I submit, make an approach to this problem from the financial side on the lines indicated in the Resolution quite inappropriate. It is, in fact, not possible for the Government of India to do other than they are doing now ; that is,

[Mr. C. E. Jones.]

to float loans on the security of the general revenues of the Government of India and to take all that the market is prepared or can be induced to lend. The proceeds of all such loans must necessarily go into the general ways and means position of the Government of India.

But there is the further point that at the present time, in the present abnormal circumstances, it is impossible for any Government to commit itself to any definite financial policy or undertake any heavy and indefinite commitments in the form of block allocations for individual purposes. The first point that would at once arise would be, what will be the financial resources of India after the war? And that again involves questions of policy, such as whether after the war it will be India's desire to go ahead with taxation on the present war-time level for the sake of post-war development schemes, or whether in the interests of the country the level of taxation should be relaxed and somewhat lesser resources devoted to these schemes of development. That is a policy which, as the Honourable Pandit Kunzru said, must be decided by the Government of the day when the time comes.

What I am saying now arises out of no desire to shirk responsibility or to refuse to face facts, and it certainly does not arise from a lack of proper understanding of the value of post-war development. But I would submit that there are uncertainties inherent in a transition from abnormal war conditions to the equally abnormal conditions that may prevail in the early post-war period. These uncertainties are bound to arise and cannot be decided in advance by the Government now. What the Central Government is doing and what it must do is to see that all preparations are made and all plans are ready, so that when they have a complete picture of possible post-war progress in the various directions, they will be in a position to take a decision as to what is of prime urgency and which schemes should be undertaken at once and which should be postponed for implementation when funds permit. And in coming to decisions on such questions, I have no doubt that the Government will wish to associate with themselves the General Policy Reconstruction Committee which has recently been appointed.

Therefore, while I sympathise, and sympathise deeply, with the object underlying this Resolution, I would put it to the Honourable Member and I am reassured in taking this attitude by what the Honourable Pandit Kunzru himself said that the financial approach suggested is not the one which is best suited to this question, and that it is a matter which must be decided in due course in the light of the considerations which I have mentioned. Possibly the Honourable Member will consider that his object has been achieved in having had this subject ventilated today and with the expression of views that the debate has elicited.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Mr President, the Resolution which I have had the honour to move has had, so far as its objective is concerned, a large amount of support in this House. I say a large amount of support because I am not clear in my mind as to what the attitude of the Honourable Mr. Dalal was——

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL: May I explain? I have said that I am in entire agreement with the principle of the Resolution. My only difficulty was to find out how Government are going to collect the money for such schemes.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: As the House will remember, I did not go into the question of finance deliberately because I felt that that was a matter for experts, and I did not say anything to suggest that I wanted taxation to be increased now or in the immediate future. I left the question of finance to be dealt with by experts. My object was to draw attention to two important aspects of the nation's life, aspects which will condition the nation's progress towards a fuller and richer life. It may be that the specific suggestion which I have made for the building up of a Reconstruction Fund has certain inherent defects in being worked out immediately. But my object was to focus attention on the public health question and on the educational question and I would, therefore, suggest that Government might agree to the Resolution with your permission, being passed by this Council in an amended form. I can only suggest that amendment with your permission, Sir. It is such an innocuous amendment, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The original Resolution cannot be amended at this stage after the full discussion we have had. I would advise you, therefore, in the face of the assurances given to you by Government, to withdraw your Resolution.

* THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: I have just ascertained the opinion of Government, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Can you give me a single precedent in which there has been such a thing done?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: We are not trying to depart from established precedent, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Jones, are you prepared to agree to an amended Resolution being substituted now?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: I would have no objection, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: (to the Honourable Mr. Sapru)* What is your amended Resolution?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: It will read like this, Sir:—

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to keep in view the necessity of finding funds for Education expansion and development and Public Health improvement and development both in the centrally administered areas and the Provinces in framing their reconstruction programme."

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: (to the Honourable Mr. Jones) Do you accept that?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: Yes, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The question is that this amended Resolution be adopted.

The motion was adopted.

RESOLUTION *RE* REMOVAL OF RESTRICTIONS ON PUBLICATION OF NEWS.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT (to the Honourable Mr. Kunzru): Yours is a very important Resolution and I do not want that you should lose your priority. You can therefore move the Resolution today.

* THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: (United Provinces Northern; Non-Muhammadan): Mr. President, I am much obliged to you for allowing me to move the Resolution today. Mr. President, I beg to move:—

"That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to remove all restrictions on the publication of news not relating to the war and in particular news relating to the internal political conditions and the economic well-being of the people, and to persuade the Provincial Governments to adopt the same policy."

I hope, Sir, that it will meet with your approval and be to the convenience of the House if I reserve my speech to the next non-official day.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You can reserve your speech. The Resolution will be taken up on the next non-official day.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN (Leader of the House): Sir, I have to announce a slight alteration of the dates for the food debate. Instead of Thursday and Friday, I suggest that we meet now on Friday and Saturday. I understand that in the Assembly the food debate is still going on and will not be finished before tomorrow.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Are you all agreed?

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: I thought, Sir, that the Honourable Member had also agreed to giving us an extra day.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: I am coming to that. If the debate is not concluded on Saturday, I am agreeable to its being continued on Tuesday the 23rd after Government Bills are disposed of.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, the 19th November, 1943.

* Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

COUNCIL OF STATE.

Friday, 19th November, 1943.

The Council met in the Council Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

MESSAGE FRO M HIS MAJESTY THE KING TO GENERAL EISENHOWER ON THE VICTORY IN SICILY.

58. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Is it a fact that His Majesty, the King-Emperor of India, in course of a very heartening and congratulatory message to General Eisenhower, on the final accomplishment of the occupation of Sicily, has been graciously pleased to state as follows :-

> " I should be grateful if you would convey to my British and Canadian troops a special assurance of my pride in their share of this victory " (*vide* the " Pioneer ", dated the 20th August, 1943) ?

Will Government state if Indian troops were also employed in this successful campaign in Sicily, and if so, did they acquit their part creditably ?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF : Yes, Sir. I would refer the Honourable Member to the reply to question No. 5 in which I have mentioned the small but very creditable part played by Indian troops in Sicily. In this connection I should like to make it clear that personal congratulations from His Majesty the King-Emperor are a rare honour sent at His Majesty's discretion when troops have played a particularly outstanding part in an operation. Such messages were sent to the Indian soldiers in Tunisia.

INDIAN COMMERCIAL MISSION TO ARGENTINA.

59. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Is it a fact that an Indian Commerical Mission recently visited Argentina, and had conference with Chancellor Storni, with reference to exchange of products between Argentina and India ? If so, who were the members of the Indian Mission, and what was the result of it ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI : The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative. The other parts do not arise.

MINISTERIAL STAFF OF THE CYPHER BUREAU.

60. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Will Government state how many officers and members of the ministerial staff are employed in the Cypher Bureau of the Government ; and out of them how many are Indians, Anglo-Indians, and Europeans ; and what are their respective salaries ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : The staff of the Central Cypher Bureau consists of one officer, two Superintendents, 29 Cypher Assistants, one clerk, one stenographer, and a type-section of 12 women typists, a total of 46 persons.

The officer is an Anglo-Indian, as are all the women typists. Of the remaining 33 persons, 14 are Hindus, 14 Anglo-Indians, 3 Muslims, 1 is a Sikh and 1 an Indian Christian.

The Officer's salary is in the scale of Rs. 1,000—50—1,250.

The salaries of the two Superintendents are in the scale of Rs. 600—40—800.

Those of the " Old entrant " Assistants are in the scale of Rs. 200—15—500, while those of new entrants are in the scale of Rs. 140—10—280 (E. B.)—10—310—15—400.

The stenographer's pay is in the scale of Rs. 175—12½—375—15—450—25—500 and that of the clerk in the scale of Rs. 100—8—300.

The women typists begin at Rs. 100 per mensem, receive an increment of Rs. 4 per mensem after completing every 4 years' service until they reach a pay of Rs. 120 per mensem, and after a further five years' service receive a single increment of Rs. 5, giving them a maximum salary of Rs. 125 per mensem.

OBSERVATIONS OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY AT THE GENERAL MEETING OF THE ALL-INDIA CATTLE SHOW SOCIETY.

61. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the following observations made by His Excellency, the Viceroy, at the annual general meeting of the All-India Cattle Show Society, at the Viceroy's House, on the 1st September, 1943 :—

> "Cattle are in real sense, the basis of India's economy, and the deep and traditional reverence paid to them by so many millions throughout this country has a very real and solid basis.....In this immense agricultural country which feeds the largest population in the whole world, almost every seed that germinates, owes its debt to the work of cattle in ploughing up the soil, and almost every grain that is carried to the markets to feed the great urban population, is carried there by bullock transport" ?

(*b*) In view of the above, do Government propose to take necessary and early steps in the interest of India's economy, to prevent the increased slaughter of cattle for purposes of food for the American and British troops stationed in India ?

(*c*) Do Government propose to import cattle, or cattle meat for the above purpose ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Necessary restrictions have already been imposed preventing the slaughter of useful cattle for supplying beef to the defence services in India. No cow in milk, or pregnant cow or working cattle used for ploughing or transportation is accepted by them for slaughter. Steps are also being taken and necessary enquiries have been made regarding the provision of the requisite refrigeration plant and rolling stock, as well as road transport to enable imported frozen meat to be handled in India. If the scheme materializes, the slaughter of cattle in India for food purposes will be further reduced.

(*c*) The import of live cattle is not practicable owing to—

(*i*) the large number of specially fitted ships that would be required, if available, to provide a regular supply; and

(*ii*) non-existence in India of facilities for storing frozen meat and moving it by road and rail to consumption points.

It may be explained, however, that two-thirds of the beef requirements of the defence services are met by importing tinned bully beef from abroad. Only the remaining one-third is supplied from Indian sources.

IMPLICATIONS OF LEND-LEASE OPERATIONS.

62. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the statement of President Roosevelt, in his 11th report to United States Congress on Lend-Lease operations, that "the United States wanted no new war debts. Victory and secure peace were the coins in which repayment could be made", and also that "Congress in passing and extending the Lend-Lease Act made it plain that the United States want no new war debts to jeopardise the coming peace. Victory and secure peace are the only coins in which we can be repaid". ("The Pioneer", dated the 27th August, 1943) ?

(*b*) In view of the above, will Government state the full implications of Lend-Lease operations between the United States of America, and India, in terms of financial obligations between the two countries in respect of lend-lease articles and commodities exchanged between them ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) As far as the Government of India are aware there are no financial obligations between India and the United States of America in respect of such articles and commodities.

PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A TUNNEL THROUGH THE DELHI RIDGE.

63. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government state whether there is any scheme to make a two mile long tunnel through the Delhi ridge; and that the water of the Jamna canal is to be carried through it to the Gurgaon District ? If so, what is the total estimated expenditure; initial

and recurring; and how much of it will fall on the Central revenues? What is the benefit likely to accrue from it and what is the main outline of the scheme?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: It is understood that the Punjab Government have under consideration a scheme for the extension of the Western Jumna Canal involving the construction of a tunnel through the ridge near Delhi, but they have not yet formally approached the Government of India. Government have no official information on the total estimated cost of the scheme. The question of the allocation of expenditure between the Central and the Provincial Government does not arise. The Punjab Government expect that the Canal will irrigate large areas in the Gurgaon and neighbouring districts. Government have no official information on the outlines of the scheme.

FLOOD DISASTER IN AJMER-MERWARA.

64. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government give the details of the flood disaster in Ajmer-Merwara in August last, the number of lives lost, an approximate value of the properties destroyed, and state the measures taken by Government to relieve the distress and the amount of expenditure incurred?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the reply which the Honourable the Home Member gave in another place on the 12th August 1943 to a short-notice question put by Rai Bahadur Seth Bhagchand Soni on the same subject and to the press note issued by the Chief Commissioner of Ajmer-Merwara on the 11th September, 1943, a copy of which I place on the table of the House. I also place on the table a statement giving further information.

PRESS COMMUNIQUÉ.

The Officer on Special Duty appointed in connection with the recent flood disaster in Ajmer-Merwara has after a thorough and careful investigation reported the following loss of life and property:—Human life 1,691, cattle 662, goats and sheep 5,275, collapsed houses about 3,300. In addition grain and ornaments valued at many thousands of rupees were also lost. Nearly 10,000 bighas of culturable land has been damaged of which half the area is reclaimable. 831 wells, 209 doris (lifts), 8 tanks and four Nadis (small tanks) were also damaged. As far as Ajmer-Merwara is concerned the accounts of loss of life which have recently been appearing in the press are greatly exaggerated.

The organisation set up to undertake relief measures is working satisfactorily. The devastated area has been divided into five circles with an officer in charge of each circle, in addition to other officers who supervise the work in each circle. A. R. P. and National War Front officers were also employed on various relief measures. Non-official agencies both local as well as from outside continue to do useful work. The Government of India have deputed five sub-Assistant Surgeons, five compounders and one dispensor for duty in the villages affected, and have supplied adequate stock of medicines. There has been no epidemic of any kind and the state of health of the people is as good as it can be in the circumstances. For the immediate needs of the sufferers the Government of India promptly placed a lakh of rupees at the disposal of the Local Administration. Donations in response to the appeal issued by me are coming in and total over 91,000 actually received. Including the sums promised the amount is nearly Rs. 1,13,000.

After the disaster thousands of people had to be fed daily and although the present number has decreased there are still nearly 3,000 persons who are being maintained. Food depots were opened at central places in the circles and it is gratifying that not a single death occurred from starvation. Large quantities of clothes have been distributed chiefly by charitable institutions and arrangements are in hand for the supply of warm clothing. Nearly 60,000 rupees have been spent so far on food and sirki shelter etc., by the Local administration. Kharif seed was distributed free of cost to those cultivators who wished to re-sow their fields and arrangements were made to provide implements of husbandry to those who had lost their own. Rabi seed will be distributed soon and steps have been taken to advance taccavi loans free of interest for purchasing the seed. Where rents are paid in cash Istimrardars (landlords) have been asked to remit kharif and rabi rents suitably in accordance with the loss. Action is also being taken to make the Istimrardars start work on repairing of tanks, cleaning of wells and reclaiming of silted up lands. A special sub-Committee is enquiring into the problem of reconstruction of new houses on better sites, and its recommendations will soon be submitted. The Government of India would be requested to bear part of the expenditure on giving effect to the recommendations. The Government of India have been requested to depute a flood expert who may after investigating into the causes of the flood advise the Local Administration regarding the steps that it may be possible to take to avoid a similar calamity in future.

AJMER,
Dated September 11, 1943.

S. KHURSHID, *I.C.S.*,
Chief Commissioner, Ajmer-Merwara.

Statement containing further information in reply to the Honourable Raja Yuveraj Dutta Singh's question No. 64 regarding Ajmer floods.

The recommendations made by the officer on Special Duty have been considered by the Chief Commissioner and appropriate action on those recommendations has already been, or is being, taken. The grant of one lakh of rupees made by the Government of India for the immediate needs of the sufferers was found more than sufficient and it was therefore possible for the Chief Commissioner to continue gratuitous relief up to the end of October without asking for further assistance. Subscriptions to the Ajmer-Merwara Flood Relief Fund amounted to Rs. 1,15,000 by about the third week of September while some promises of subscriptions still remain to be fulfilled.

2. For the restoration of normal conditions, action on the following lines is outstanding :—

(1) Reconstruction of houses.
(2) Reclamation of damaged lands.
(3) Repairs to damaged tanks, lifts and wells.
(4) Fresh classification of soil of the affected area.
(5) Sowing of the *rabi* crops.

As regards the reconstruction of houses, it is estimated that the balance of the Flood Relief Fund supplemented by free grants of bamboos, tiles, moonj, wood, mud and stone would be adequate for the purpose of reconstructions of the 8,300 houses destroyed by the flood. Efforts are also being made to reconstruct on modern lines the villages of Chosla, Kadera and Deomand, which were entirely destroyed by the floods, with the assistance of a number of officers and men, having knowledge of military engineering, kindly offered by the Officer Commanding at Nasirabad Cantonment.

Out of 10,000 *bighas* of culturable land which has been damaged by the floods, it will be possible to reclaim an area of about 5,960 *bighas* at an estimated cost of about Rs. 71,000 while the rest cannot be reclaimed without a disproportionate expenditure of labour and money.

The repairs to tanks, lifts, etc., are estimated to cost a further lakh of rupees. Since none of the villages affected is a *khalsa* village, efforts are being made to restore the damage done through istimrardars and jagirdars and suitable special takkavi grants are being made for the purpose as well as for the reclamation of fields.

The question of the re-classification of the soil is under consideration.

The distribution of *rabi* seed has been taken in hand and it is hoped that full advantage will be taken of the fertile silt which has been deposited over an area at least as great as that which has been permanently damaged.

FLIGHT OF CAPITAL AND MIGRATION OF FACTORY, ETC.

65. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government make a statement on the subject of the flight of capital, and the migration of factories and industrial plant from British India to Indian States; and the steps taken or proposed to be taken to discourage and prevent such a tendency?

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. S. A. HYDARI: Government have taken no action specifically directed against Indian States. The rest of the question does not therefore arise.

INDIAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN ITALY.

66. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Has the attention of Government been drawn to the statement of the Secretary of War, Sir James Grigg, in Parliament, towards the close of August last, that "The Italian Government have now given an assurance that no British Prisoners of War have been transferred to Germany since the fall of the Fascist regime"?

Will Government state whether there were Indian Prisoners of War in Italy; and does the expression "British Prisoners of War" include Indian prisoners of War? Have Government made any enquiry as to the fate and whereabouts of Indian Prisoners of War in Italian hands?

THE HONOURABLE MALIK SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON: Yes, Government have seen the statement. On the 31st July, 1943, there were 5,442 Indian Prisoners of War in Italy and the expression referred to by the Honourable Member includes these prisoners. During the period between the fall of the Fascist regime and the capitulation of the Italian Government there were no transfers of British and Indian Prisoners of War from Italy to Germany. Shortly after the capitulation, the majority of Prisoners of War Camps in Italy passed to German control. It is reported by the International Red Cross that 5,000 Indian Prisoners of War have been transferred from Italy to Germany. Over two hundred Indian Prisoners of War have rejoined the advancing Allied Forces.

IMPORT OF GOODS FOR CIVILIAN USE IN INDIA.

67. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Is it a fact that towards the beginning of September, "the shipping situation having appreciably improved, Government proposed to import large quantities of certain consumable goods such as whisky and toilet goods, etc., to ease the existing shortage in respect of the same"?

If so, how much of whisky, and toilet goods, etc., have been imported into India since then?

(*b*) How much food-grains for the relief of flood-striken people of Bengal, Ajmer-Merwara, and elsewhere have been imported into this country since then?

(*c*) Has the import of whisky and toilet goods, etc., been given preference over the import of essential foodgrains for the suffering people of India?

(*d*) Have Government received any representation on this subject from the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: (*a*) In September last it was found possible to provide shipping space for substantial quantities of spirits and other goods which had been awaiting shipment in the United Kingdom for a considerable period. Figures for imports of whisky are not separately available but according to information at present available 320 gross tons of liquors were imported in September and October, 1943, for civil purposes from all sources. The corresponding figure for toilet requisites is 78 gross tons.

(*b*) About 50,000 tons since September, 1943.

(*c*) No.

(*d*) Yes.

STATEMENT OF MR. SUHRAWARDY REGARDING TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS FOR FOODGRAINS IN BENGAL.

68. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the following statement of Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Minister for Civil Supplies, Bengal, in his address to a Press Conference in Calcutta, on the 1st September, 1943:—

"As regards the transport arrangements, the less said the better. I have no desire to quarrel with the Government of India, to which, after all, we look for succour, and whose good-will we must always preserve if we are to get foodgrains from all parts of India. But I just want to say this that any impression that the Government of Bengal at this end cannot clear foodgrains expeditiously, whatever be the quantities sent to us, is wholly incorrect and not in accordance with facts. At a certain stage there was serious bungling, and our yards here were congested, so much so that bookings had to be suspended by the East Indian Railway for a while. There were some mistakes somewhere, but people who know will tell you that they were not the mistakes of the Government of Bengal"?

(*b*) Will Government state if the above represents the true facts; and who were responsible for the "serious bungling" and "mistakes" at a time when people in Bengal were starving to death?

THE HONOURABLE SIR SATYENDRA NATH ROY: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) It is a fact that from time to time there has been considerable confusion at the terminal stations in Calcutta owing to receipt of wagons far in excess of their unloading capacity, which has resulted in congestion and consequent imposition of restrictions on traffic into Calcutta. This state of things was caused mainly by—

(*i*) the difficulty of getting consignors to consign wagons to their proper destinations; and

(*ii*) delays in clearing wagons of which a large number arrived on account of private merchants.

DEARTH OF SMALL COINS IN THE UNITED PROVINCES.

69. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Have Government received any representation from the United Provinces Government to give the latter its full share of small coins? If so, what have Government done in the matter?

(*b*) Are Government aware that the dearth of small coins is still acutely felt in most of the areas of United Provinces, urban as well as rural, which greatly interferes with trade, business, and public transactions ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: (*a*) Yes.

The small coin shortage was most acute in its early stages in Bengal, Bombay and Madras where military and industrial activity were at the highest tempo.

As the additional supplies of small coin fell short of the total demand, it was necessary to use them to the best immediate advantage and so at first they were issued chiefly in these areas. As the situation became easier up-country remittances were augmented though some time lag was involved owing to the difficulty experienced in obtaining police escorts and transport facilities, particularly in Calcutta. These difficulties were surmounted and larger and more frequent up-country remittances were made from the ever increasing newly minted suppli s. During the period April-September, 1943, small coin to the value of over Rs. 1 crore has been supplied to the Currency Officer, Cawnpore, which is considerably more than double the amount supplied during the corresponding period of the previous year. As additional supplies become available remittances will be increased still further.

(*b*) Government are aware that in spite of these large remittances inconvenience is still being felt in parts of the United Provinces though the situation in that province has on the whole become somewhat easier. The slower response to increased issues in the United Provinces appears to arise from the prevalence of hoarding small coin, particularly in the villages.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Has any representation been received from other Provinces on the same lines ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES : I would like to ask for notice, Sir.

STATUS AND PRIVILEGES OF INDIANS IN RECONSTRUCTED BURMA.

70. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : (*a*) In view of what the Indians did in Burma, both before and after it ceased to be a part of the Indian Empire, and also what they are doing now in assisting its reconquest, will Government state what steps they have taken or propose to take to ensure that Indians enjoyed the same status and privileges in reconstructed Burma as the Britishers, or the Americans or other non-Burmans in that country ?

(*b*) Are Government aware that on the invasion of Burma by Japan, the citizens of Rangoon were asked to leave Rangoon within 48 hours on February 20, 1942, and obviously they could not take away their goods with them in this short period and the " Burma Government " has rejected such claims of the Indians under the War Risks (Goods) Insurance Scheme ? What steps have Government taken in this matter, and with what result ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN : (*a*) The Government of India have obtained an assurance from the Government of Burma that on important subjects, of interest not only to Burma Indians but also to the Government of India and the public in India, it is their intention not only to consult the opinion of Burma Indians but also to take account of Indian public opinion and to enter into full discussion and negotiation with the Government of India before submitting their final proposals to the Secretary of State. The views expressed by the Honourable Member will clearly need to be considered when that stage is reached.

(*b*) The Honourable Member has correctly described the circumstances in which many citizens left Rangoon. The Government of India are advised, however, that loss of property in those circumstances was not covered by the Burma War Risks (Goods) Insurance Scheme.

ALLEGATION OF PROFITEERING BY THE BENGAL GOVERNMENT BY SELLING WHEAT.

71. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Is it a fact that Government have made an inquiry, or have undertaken to make an inquiry, into the allegation that the Bengal Government are, or have been, making profit by selling wheat in Bengal at rates higher than the purchase prices ? What are the facts, and what steps have been taken in this matter ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the Press Note on the subject issued by the Government of India on the 9th October, 1943, and to the resolution dated the 3rd November, 1943, constituting

a Committee of Enquiry. A copy of the note and of the resolution are placed on the table.

PRESS NOTE

WHEAT PRICES IN BENGAL

Central Government explains position

The attention of the Government of India has been drawn to the anxiety prevailing in the two main wheat exporting provinces lest the Government of Bengal may have derived, or should henceforth derive, an undue addition to Provincial Revenues from the sale of wheat exported or to be exported from these provinces to Bengal under arrangements made by the Government of India. The Government of India have accordingly obtained from the Government of Bengal a statement of position which is as follows :—

2. All wheat imported from other provinces under arrangements made by the Government of India is held in Government custody. Since the first of May last wheat is being sold to mills at a fixed price. Consignments received prior to that date were made over to the mills direct at cost price. The mills are allowed to sell their wheat products at ex-mill prices fixed under the Defence of India Rules corresponding to the retail rates for such products which are also fixed statutorily. The schedule of rates in force from the first May is as follows :—

Period.	Rate for sales of wheat to Mills.	Ex-Mill prices atta and flour respectively.	Retail prices atta and flour respectively.
	Rs. per md.	Rs. per md.	Rs. per md.
1st May to 1st August	15 8 0	19 0 0	20 0 0
		19 0 0	20 0 0
1st August to 20th September . . .	14 4 0	16 8 0	17 8 0
		19 0 0	20 0 0
20th September onward	12 12 0	14 0 0	15 0 0
		19 0 0	20 0 0

3. During the four months May to August 1943 inclusive the Bengal Government have derived a gross revenue of Rs. 33·44 lakhs on a turn-over of 19·84 lakhs maunds of imported wheat. This has been derived solely from sales of wheat to mills. The Bengal Government are not concerned in any of the subsequent transactions. In considering this revenue figure it has to be conceded that the Government of Bengal fixed their selling prices of wheat to the mills having regard to a number of estimated charges for handling storage, delivery, etc. which in view of the poor deliveries of wheat in most of the months in question were never actually incurred. It will be noticed that the Government of Bengal effected a reduction of Rs. 1-4 per maund in their sale price of wheat with effect from the 1st August when it became apparent that receipts were accumulating. The price now in force is Rs. 12-12 per maund which, regard being had to the F.O.R. prices current in the Punjab and the United Provinces respectively, will represent an actual loss to the Bengal Government. On the footing that the quantities still due under the Basic Plan are exported to Bengal in an even monthly flow, it is estimated that the Bengal Government's loss on sales of imported wheat to mills over the remaining period of the revised Basic Plan will amount to Rs. 40·3 lakhs which after deducting the accumulated revenue of Rs. 33·44 lakhs will leave a net loss to the Bengal Government of Rs. 6·86 lakhs.The Government of India are satisfied that the selling price of wheat now fixed by the Government of Bengal is reasonable.

4. As regards the 'Milling Differential' allowed to the mills the Government of India have decided that the question should be gone into by the Regional Commissioner, Eastern Region, Mr. Justice Braund, with the aid of a Cost Accounts Officer of the Government of India, with a view to ascertaining whether the "Differential" allowed to the mills, and the consequential retail prices to the public are reasonable.

5. The above calculations do not include imported wheat products, which the Government of Bengal have been selling at the statutory prices fixed for ex-mill sales detailed in paragraph 2. The gross revenue received by the Government of Bengal on resales of imported wheat products up to the end of August 1943 amounts to Rs. 6·32 lakhs. In regard to this revenue, it would be undesirable and unworkable in practice to fix different sets of wholesale and retail prices for local and imported wheat products. The question of wiping out the accumulated revenue on wheat products is, however, under the active consideration of the Government of Bengal.

FOOD DEPARTMENT,
New Delhi, October 9, 1943.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEPARTMENT OF FOOD
Resolution

No. F. 10(1)-Secy./43. *New Delhi, the 3rd November, 1943.*

The Government of India have had under consideration measures for ensuring that the retail cost of wheat and wheat-products sold to the public in Bengal is reasonable and that no

undue element of profit is included in those prices. It has been recently announced publicly that the Government of Bengal have reduced their selling price of wheat to the millers by Rs. 1-4 and the Government of India are satisfied that the reduced selling price fixed by the Bengal Government of Rs. 12-12 per maund of wheat sold to the flour Mills in Calcutta is reasonable.

2. In order to satisfy themselves that there is no excessive element of profit in the prices charged for wheat-products at subsequent stages, the Government of India have decided to appoint a Committee of Inquiry, consisting of (1) Honourable Mr. Justice H. B. L. Braund, Bar-at-Law, Regional Commissioner (Food), Eastern Region, and (2) Mr. A. L. Cooke, Chief Cost Accounts Officer, Supply Finance Department.

3. The terms of reference to the Committee are as follows :—

(I) To enquire—

(*a*) whether the profit accruing to the flour mills from the production and sale at the ex-mill statutory prices of wheat products made from wheat purchased from the Government of Bengal is reasonable, having regard to such variations in output and other conditions as may from time to time arise and, if not, what adjustment ought to be made so as to secure a reasonable rate of profit in the interest of the public and all parties concerned.

(*b*) whether the profit accruing to retailers in the sale at the statutory retail prices of wheat products purchased from the mills is reasonable.

(II) To make recommendations as to the proportions in which atta, flour and bran should be produced by the mills in Calcutta out of wheat bought from Government, and the respective prices at which they should be sold to the public.

(Sd.) W. H. J. CHRISTIE.

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

CENSUS OF BRITISH ASIATIC EVACUEES IN INDIA.

72. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : (*a*) Is it a fact that a census of Indian Burman, and other Asiatic British evacuees at present in India, has been taken ? If so, will Government give the figures of the above separately ?

(*b*) What are the respective figures for European British and foreign evacuees ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN : (*a*) The census is being taken during the current month and the tabulated results will not be ready before February, 1944.

(*b*) Separate figures for European British and foreign evacuees in India are not available ; their total number is 10,464.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT EMPIRE COUNCIL.

73. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Are Government aware of the proposal of establishing a permanent Empire Council in order to bring the Dominions into closer consultation and co-operation with the United Kingdom and each other ?

On the successful termination of the War, do Government propose to press the claims of this country to be included in such an organisation on absolutely equal terms for the purpose of mutual help and co-operation in times of need ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : I have seen reports in the Press about the proposal put forward by the Prime Minister of Australia for the formation of a supreme Empire executive body or a consultative body to co-operate with Allied Nations in post-war reconstruction. No official information has been received but the Honourable Member may rest assured that if a proposal on these lines is put to the Government of India the need that India should be represented will be urged.

REMARKS OF SARDAR BALDEV SINGH ON THE FOOD CRISIS IN BENGAL.

74. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Has the attention of Government been drawn to the following remarks of Sardar Baldev Singh, Food and Development Minister of the Punjab, on the food crisis in Bengal :—

" There was no doubt that huge profits were still being made either by the Bengal Government, or stockists, middlemen and other agencies. There should be no surprise if people began to harbour grave doubts about the manner in which the situation was still being handled by the provincial authorities. " And further that " he

revealed that the dispatches from the Punjab since August 15 last were about 50,000 tons, and the profits made on this account alone by the Bengal Government would amount to about Rs. 20,00,000 " (*vide* the " Pioneer ", dated the 16th September, 1943).

What steps have Government taken or propose to take against the Bengal Government under the powers of superintendence, direction and control which they possess under the constitution ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : The Honourable Member's attention is drawn to a Press Note, dated 9th October, 1943, which was issued on the subject and to the Resolution of the Government of India published in the Gazette of the 6th November, copies of which are placed on the table.

PRESS NOTE

WHEAT PRICES IN BENGAL

Central Government explains position

The attention of the Government of India has been drawn to the anxiety prevailing in the two main wheat exporting provinces lest the Government of Bengal may have derived, or should henceforth derive, an undue addition to Provincial Revenues from the sale of wheat exported or to be exported from those provinces to Bengal under arrangements made by the Government of India. The Government of India have accordingly obtained from the Government of Bengal a statement of position which is as follows :—

2. All wheat imported from other provinces under arrangements made by the Government of India is held in Government custody. Since the first of May last wheat is being sold to mills at a fixed price. Consignment received prior to that date were made over to the mills direct at cost price. The mills are allowed to sell their wheat products at ex-mill prices fixed under the Defence of India Rules corresponding to the retail rates for such products which are also fixed statutorily. The schedule of rates in force from the first May is as follows :—

Period.	Rate for sales of wheat to Mills.	Ex-Mill prices atta and flour respectively.	Retail prices atta and flour respectively.
	Rs. per md.	Rs. per md.	Rs. per md.
1st May to 1st August	15 8 0	19 0 0	20 0 0
		19 0 0	20 0 0
1st August to 20th September	14 4 0	16 8 0	17 8 0
		19 0 0	20 0 0
20th September onward	12 12 0	14 0 0	15 0 0
		19 0 0	20 0 0

3. During the four months May to August 1943 inclusive the Bengal Government have derived a gross revenue of Rs. 33·44 lakhs on a turn-over of 19·84 lakhs maunds of imported wheat. This has been derived solely from sales of wheat to mills. The Bengal Government are not concerned in any of the subsequent transactions. In considering this revenue figure it has to be conceded that the Government of Bengal fixed their selling prices of wheat to the mills having regard to a number of estimated charges for handling storage, delivery, etc. which in view of the poor deliveries of wheat in most of the months in question were never actually incurred. It will be noticed that the Government of Bengal effected a reduction of Rs. 1-4 per maund in their sale price of wheat with effect from the 1st August when it became apparent that receipts were accumulating. The price now in force is Rs. 12-12 per maund which, regard being had to the F.O.R. prices current in the Punjab and the United Provinces respectively, will represent an actual loss to the Bengal Government. On the footing that the quantities still due under the Basic Plan are exported to Bengal in an even monthly flow, it is estimated that the Bengal Government's loss on sales of imported wheat to mills over the remaining period of the revised Basic plan will amount to Rs. 40·3 lakhs which after deducting the accumulated revenue of Rs. 33·44 lakhs will leave a net loss to the Bengal Government of Rs. 6·86 lakhs. The Government of India are satisfied that the selling price of wheat now fixed by the Government of Bengal is reasonable.

4. As regards the 'Milling Differential' allowed to the mills the Government of India have decided that the question should be gone into by the Regional Commissioner, Eastern Region, Mr. Justice Braund, with the aid of a Cost Accounts Officer of the Government of India, with a

view to ascertaining whether the "Differential" allowed to the mills, and the consequential retail prices to the public are reasonable.

5. The above calculations do not include imported wheat products, which the Government of Bengal have been selling at the statutory prices fixed for ex-mill sales detailed in paragraph 2 The gross revenue received by the Government of Bengal on resales of imported wheat products up to the end of August 1943 amounts to Rs. 6·32 lakhs. In regard to this revenue, it would be undesirable and unworkable in practice to fix different sets of wholesale and retail prices for local and imported wheat products. The question of wiping out the accumulated revenue on wheat products, is, however, under the active consideration of the Government of Bengal.

FOOD DEPARTMENT.

New Delhi, October 9, 1943.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

DEPARTMENT OF FOOD

Resolution

No. F. 10(1)-Secy 43. *New Delhi, the 3rd November, 1943*

The Government of India have had under consideration measures for ensuring that the retail cost of wheat and wheat products sold to the public in Bengal is reasonable and that no undue element of profit is included in those prices. It has been recently announced publicly that the Government of Bengal have reduced their selling price of wheat to the millers by Rs. 1-4, and the Government of India are satisfied that the reduced selling price fixed by the Bengal Government of Rs. 12-12 per maund of wheat sold to the flour Mills in Calcutta is reasonable.

2. In order to satisfy themselves that there is no excessive element of profit in the prices charged for wheat-products at subsequent stages, the Government of India have decided to appoint a Committee of Inquiry, consisting of (1) Honourable Mr. Justice H. B. L. Braund, Bar.-at-Law, Regional Commissioner (Food), Eastern Region, and (2) Mr. A. L. Cooke, Chief Cost Accounts Officer, Supply Finance Department.

3. The terms of reference to the Committee are as follows:—

(I) To enquire:—

(*a*) whether the profit accruing to the flour mills from the production and sale at the ex-mill statutory prices of wheat products made from wheat purchased from the Government of Bengal is reasonable, having regard to such variations in output and other conditions as may from time to time arise and, if not, what adjustment ought to be made so as to secure a reasonable rate of profit in the interest of the public and all parties concerned.

(*b*) whether the profit accruing to retailers in the sale at the statutory retail prices of wheat products purchased from the mills is reasonable.

(II) To make recommendations as to the proportions in which atta, flour and bran should be produced by the mills in Calcutta out of wheat bought from Government, and the respective prices at which they should be sold to the public.

(Sd.) W. H. J. CHRISTIE,

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

DISPUTE BETWEEN THE C. P. AND BERAR GOVERNMENT AND THE RESERVE BANK OF INDIA REGARDING THE BEARING OF THE COST OF DESTROYED CURRENCY NOTES.

75. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Was any enquiry made into the dispute between the C. P. and Berar Government and the Reserve Bank of India, as to who should bear the loss occasioned by the destruction of currency notes as a result of disturbances in Ramtek in August last year? What is the result of the enquiry and what was the amount of loss involved?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: An enquiry was made by His Excellency the Governor General with whom, under the terms of the Agreement between the Provincial Government and the Reserve Bank, rests the final decision in any dispute arising out of the terms and conditions of that Agreement. The Governor General's decision was that in this particular case the loss must fall on the Reserve Bank. The net loss involved amounted to about 2½ lakhs.

OCCUPATION OF THE BUILDINGS OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BY THE BURMA GOVERNMENT.

76. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Will Government state whether "Burma Government" have been in occupation of buildings belonging to the Central Government for office or residence, in Simla and New Delhi or Delhi City? If so, do they pay rent to the Central Government; and, if so, what amount of rent do they pay to be stated separately for such use and occupation?

(*b*) In view of the over congested nature of Simla and New Delhi or Delhi City why the headquarters of the "Burma Government" is not shifted to some less crowded city or centre in India specially in view of Lord Mountbatten's headquarters of the South East Asia Command, which is also to be located in New Delhi?

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. C. PRIOR: (*a*) A statement furnishing the required information, is laid on the table of the House.

(*b*) It was considered necessary that the Government of Burma should have their headquarters at a place where they could keep close contact with the Government of India. As they could not be accommodated in Delhi or New Delhi on account of the acute shortage of accommodation, they have been accommodated in Simla. One of the Burma Government Offices has already been shifted from Simla to Allahabad.

Burma Government have been in occupation of the following accomodation for offices or residential belonging to the Central Government, since 1942 todate.

I. In Simla.

		Amount of rent.
		Rs. A. P.
(*a*) *Office Accommodation* . . .	28, 287 sq. ft. in G. H. Q. Buildings and 3 leased houses	69,903 3 0
(*b*) *Residential accommodation* . .	House . . . . . 79 Suites in Government Hostels 73 Clerks quarters . . . 4	1,46,326 12 0
	II. In New Delhi.	
(*a*) *Office accommodation* . .	*Nil.*	*Nil.*
(*b*) *Residential accommodation* . .	Family huts . . . . 2 Suites in Government Hostels 3	2,616 9 0
	III. In Delhi City.	
Nil.	*Nil.*	*Nil.*

NOTE.—1. The amount given against (*a*) under I in column 3 above does not include the rent of two of the leased houses because the rent of those houses has not yet been fixed and could not therefore be calculated. The Government of Burma occupied them only recently.

2. The number of officers against (*b*) under II are accommodated in the office space allotted to the General Head Quarters to which they are attached. Separate calculations have not therefore been made in respect of the office accommodation occupied by them.

MEMBERSHIP OF INDIA OF THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES.

77. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government state if India, among other countries, has been invited to become a member of the Inter-Governmental Committee on refugees? If so, what is the exact scope and object of this committee and who are the representatives of India on this committee?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN: An invitation has been received and is under consideration. The Committee is concerned mainly with the accommodation and maintenance during war time of persons driven from their homes as a result of the war in Europe.

SECRETARY OF STATE'S STATEMENT ON FOOD SHORTAGE IN BENGAL.

78. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the following statements made by the Secretary of State for India, Mr. Amery, in the House of Commons, on or about the 23rd September, 1943, on the question of food shortage in Bengal:—

"The problem which faces the Government of Bengal, which, I would remind the House, is a Government of Indian ministers responsible to the local legislature,

and which is statutorily responsible for the food administration, is to obtain sufficient supplies from sources in Bengal and elsewhere, and to distribute them adequately"and further on "Primarily it is the statutory responsibility of the provincial government where these Governments have employed self-governing ministries " ?

(*b*) In view of the further assurance of Mr. Amery in the same speech that the Government of India will not hesitate to take whatever measures are necessary, will Government state what steps they have taken in the matter of speedily supplying adequate food to the starving people of Bengal and also of calling to account the Government of Bengal for its dereliction of responsibility referred to by Mr. Amery, under the ample powers of superintendence, direction and control possessed by the Central Government.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Arrangements have been made by the Government of India to purchase foodgrains and transport them from other parts of India to Bengal in steadily increasing quantities since the beginning of the year. Imports of foodgrains from overseas have also been arranged. The Government of India are in continuous touch with the Government of Bengal regarding all aspects of food supply and distribution.

INSTRUCTIONS TO INDIAN AUTHORITIES IN U. S. A. TO ARRANGE FOR SHIPMENT OF FOODGRAINS TO INDIA.

79. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government state if they have instructed " British Indian authorities stationed in the United States " to arrange for the shipping of foodgrains for the relief of the suffering people of Bengal and other parts of India and also to invite financial and other forms of assistance ? If so, when was such instruction sent and what is the measure of response from the U. S. A. ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: No, Sir.

The Government of India have examined the possibility of obtaining foodgrains for India from the United States of America but learn that for reasons of supply and shipping alike this is not at present a practical proposition. The urgency of the problem and the need for economy in the use of shipping equally require that the supply of foodgrains should be sought from the nearest possible source of supply, and all possible efforts are being made by the Government of India, with the assistance of His Majesty's Government to obtain supplies on this principle.

INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING MAINTENANCE OF HINDU ORPHANS IN BENGAL BY HINDUS.

80. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Have Government issued instructions to the Bengal Government that during the period of food shortage, Hindu orphans in Bengal should be maintained only by Hindu individuals and institutions belonging to their own community so that the destitution of orphans may not be utilized for purposes of proselytizing ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: No, Sir.

INDIAN AIR TRAINING CORPS IN THE UNIVERSITIES.

81. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government give an outline of the scheme of forming an Indian Air Training corps at Allahabad university, and at other universities ? When is the scheme to be taken in hand ?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: Sir, I lay a statement on the table, giving the information required by the Honourable Member.

Statement.

The Indian Air Training Corps Scheme, which was started as an experimental measure to induce young Indians of good family to enter the ranks of the Indian Air Force as airmen technicians, originally comprised Indian Air Training Corps at 5 Universities, namely, Aligarh, Allahabad, Punjab, Osmania and Madras. In addition, the Universities of Calcutta, Nagpur and Travancore have recently been invited to join. The Indian Air Training Corps Scheme aims to give pre-entry training to candidates for the Indian Air Force. Each Indian Air Training Corps runs 2 courses, each of 50 trainees, during the year. Instruction is imparted by a Flight Lieutenant and Sergeant Instructor of the Indian Air Force assisted by a selected Professor of the University who has undergone a course of instruction at an Air Force School and receives a stipend of Rs. 100 a month. The trainees receive uniform and a stipend of Rs. 20 per month. Air Headquarters provide equipment, and officers from Air Headquarters supervise the Indian Air Training Corps

and advise the University authorities. In addition, special Air Force Classes have been started at the Khalsa College of Punjab University. The Government of India's liability as regards these classes is restricted to the supply of the syllabus and such equipment and books as are available and the training of 3 members of the College staff.

At the completion of training candidates undergo an examination and those successful are awarded a diploma.

The Scheme has been in operation since April 1943 and one course has already been completed at Aligarh, Madras, Punjab and Osmania universities and a second course has now started at Aligarh and Osmania universities. The first course at Allahabad University has also now started. It includes the full number of 50 trainees.

Since the Indian Air Training Corps Scheme was introduced, however the recruitment of airmen technicians to the Indian Force has very much improved while that of pilots is very unsatisfactory and is causing acute anxiety. The Government of India, therefore, have decided that the Indian Air Training Corps should, in future, be used primarily for the recruitment of officers to the General Duties (Pilots) Branch of the Indian Air Force. Trainees who are recommended by the Indian Air Training Corps and University authorities for appointment as officers will not have to appear before Provincial Selection Boards but will go straight to the Officers Selection Board. The number of courses has also been increased from 2 to 3 per year and trainees, in addition to a stipend of Rs. 20 per month, will be eligible to receive an allowance of Rs. 1-8-0 a day when undergoing a course of training during vacation or free messing and accommodation when undergoing intensive training at an Air Force Establishment.

DEPUTATION TO U. S. A. AND BRITAIN TO EXPLAIN INDIA'S WAR EFFORTS.

82. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Is it a fact that Sir Srinivas Sarma, Mr. M. Ghiasuddin, M.L.A. (Central), Mr. R. B. Bhole, M.L.A. (Bombay) and Mr. H. G. Misra of Cawnpore have been deputed by Government to proceed on tour to the U. S. A. and Britain to give the public in both countries a first hand account of India's war efforts ? Have these gentlemen been given any specific line of instructions for their work and will their activities be confined only to giving an account of India's war efforts or will they be employed in other political propaganda also ?

(*b*) Are there no organisations for this kind of work in the U. S. A. and Britain and what is the estimated total expenditure of this expedition ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: (*a*) Yes. These gentlemen have been instructed to speak in the United Kingdom and United States of America only on India's war effort. They have been provided with the necessary information and before their departure abroad were sent on an instructional tour in this country to see the facts for themselves. Government have no intention of employing them for political propaganda.

(*b*) Yes, the Ministry of Information of His Majesty's Government and the Information Office of the Agent General for India in United States of America. The tour is being arranged on the suggestion of these two organisations, and a part of the expenditure will be borne by His Majesty's Government. An estimate of the portion falling on Indian revenues will be laid on the table of the House as soon as the details have been settled.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Is it a fact, Sir, that these gentlemen have been given a sort of training on the subject in which they are going to speak ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: Public men like the Honourable gentleman who has put the question do not require any training at all.

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: Will Government be pleased to publish the correspondence that passed between the Government of India and the British and the United States Governments on this subject ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: It is confidential, and confidential correspondence is generally not published.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: How do these gentlemen represent India ? To which organisations do they belong ? What public services have they rendered ? What is their title to speak on behalf of the people of India ? Will the Honourable the Leader of the House explain ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: They are all public men, and they have been doing a lot of public service all these years. Patriotism is not confined to party organisations alone.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: May I know what public services Mr. H. G. Misra, apart from making profits for himself out of this war, has rendered to this country? May I know what public services Sir Srinivas Sarma, apart from editing possibly a subsidised paper, "The Whip", has rendered to this country? May I know what services Mr. R. B. Bhole, M.L.A. (Bombay), has rendered to this country? What is their *locus standi* with any political organisation in this country?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: I do not carry this information in my pocket. I must ask for notice of the question.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: What were the considerations which actuated Government in selecting these gentlemen to tour in the United States and Britain to give the public a firsthand account of India's war effort?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: Years of public service and patriotism.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: May I know whether as a matter of fact the Dominions have advertised their war effort in the United States or the United Kingdom? Has Canada sent any deputation to the United States to advertise her war effort there? Has Australia sent any deputation to advertise her war effort in the United States and Britain? Has New Zealand sent any mission? Has even South Africa sent any delegation of this nature to advertise her war effort in those countries?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: I have no information as to whether these countries have sent their representatives to the United States and Britain or not. We have sent the delegation simply because the Ministry of Information of His Majesty's Government and the Agent General for India in the United States asked for it.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: May I take it that this delegation has been sent in response to the demand of the Ministry of Information in England, and that the Government of India had no initiative in this matter?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: It is in the answer that I gave.

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: What particular special experience have these gentlemen in India's war effort?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: They do not require any experience. They have lived in India. They have seen what India is doing. They have been doing all that they possibly can to help the war effort in India. What more experience do you want?

BENGAL GOVERNMENT'S PROFIT OUT OF WHEAT SELLING.

83. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the following admission made by Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, in his speech in the Bengal Legislative Assembly on or about the 27th September, last:

"The position was that in the beginning the Bengal Government was making certain profits out of wheat and wheat products"?

(*b*) Have Government received any explanation from the Bengal Government why the latter was making profits when the population of Bengal was suffering from intense food scarcity and destitution?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the Press Note on the subject which was issued on 9th of October. A copy of the note is placed on the table.

PRESS NOTE.

WHEAT PRICES IN BENGAL.

Central Government Explains Position.

The attention of the Government of India has been drawn to the anxiety prevailing in the two main wheat exporting provinces lest the Government of Bengal may have derived, or should henceforth derive, an undue addition to Provincial Revenues from the sale of wheat exported or to be exported from those provinces to Bengal under arrangements made by the Government of India. The Government of India have accordingly obtained from the Government of Bengal a statement of position which is as follows:—

2. All wheat imported from other provinces under arrangements made by the Government of India is held in Government custody. Since the first of May last wheat is being sold to mills at a fixed price. Consignments received prior to that date are made over to the mills direct

at cost price. The mills are allowed to sell their wheat products at ex-mill prices fixed under the Defence of India Rules corresponding to the retail rates for such products which are also fixed statutorily. The schedule of rates in force from the first May is as follows :—

Period.	*Rate for sales of wheat to Mills.* Rs. per md.	*Ex-Mill prices atta and flour respectively.* Rs. per md.	*Retail prices atta and flour respectively.* Rs. per md.
1st May to 1st August	15 8 0	19 0 0	20 0 0
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1st August to 20th September . . .	14 4 0	16 8 0	17 8 0
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3. During the four months May to August 1943 inclusive the Bengal Government have derived a gross revenue of Rs. 33·44 lakhs on a turn-over of 19·84 lakhs maunds of imported wheat. This has been derived solely from sales of wheat to mills. The Bengal Government are not concerned in any of the subsequent transactions. In considering this revenue figure it has to be conceded that the Government of Bengal fixed their selling prices of wheat to the mills having regard to a number of estimated charges for handling storage, delivery, etc. which in view of the poor deliveries of wheat in most of the months in question were never actually incurred. It will be noticed that the Government of Bengal effected a reduction of Rs. 1-4 per maund in their sale price of wheat with effect from the 1st August when it became apparent that receipts were accumulating. The price now in force is Rs. 12-12 per maund which, regard being had to the F.O.R. prices current in the Punjab and the United Provinces respectively, will represent an actual loss to the Bengal Government. On the footing that the quantities still due under the Basic Plan are exported to Bengal in an even monthly flow, it is estimated that the Bengal Government's loss on sales of imported wheat to mills over the remaining period of the revised Basic Plan will amount to Rs. 40·3 lakhs which after deducting the accumulated revenue of Rs. 33·44 lakhs will leave a net loss to the Bengal Government of Rs. 6·86 lakhs. The Government of India are satisfied that the selling price of wheat now fixed by the Government of Bengal is reasonable.

4. As regards the 'Milling Differential' allowed to the mills the Government of India have decided that the question should be gone into by the Regional Commissioner, Eastern Region, Mr. Justice Braund, with the aid of a Cost Accounts Officer of the Government of India, with a view to ascertaining whether the "Differential" allowed to the mills, and the consequential retail prices to the public are reasonable.

5. The above calculations do not include imported wheat products, which the Government of Bengal have been selling at the statutory prices fixed for ex-mill sales detailed in paragraph 2. The gross revenue received by the Government of Bengal on resales of imported wheat products up to the end of August 1943 amounts to Rs. 6·32 lakhs. In regard to this revenue, it would be undesirable and unworkable in practice to fix different sets of wholesale and retail prices for local and imported wheat products. The question of wiping out the accumulated revenue on wheat products is, however, under the active consideration of the Government of Bengal.

FOOD DEPARTMENT.

New Delhi, October 9, 1943.

SUPPLY OF AUSTRALIAN WHEAT TO INDIA.

84. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : (*a*) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the following observations made by Mr. William James Scully, the Minister of Commerce and Agriculture, Australia, in the last week of September : "Australia could supply all the wheat needed for starving India provided the U. K. could provide ships ; wheat is practically waiting for loading on boats. There is no indication yet from the U. K. whether ships can be made available. Australia is ready and waiting" ?

(*b*) Will Government state why no arrangements could be made for supplying ships to bring wheat from Australia in time with the result that suffering and death by starvation in Bengal and elsewhere have been on an almost unprecedented scale ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : The amount of shipping that can be made available for the carriage of foodgrains from Australia to India has to be fitted into the general programme of shipping movements to meet the requirements of the war situation and tonnage had to be re-distributed for the purpose. His Majesty's Government at the instance of the Government of India have agreed to provide shipping facilities for the transport of grain from abroad to this country and several ship-loads of wheat have already arrived in India.

NEW SUPPLY ROAD ON INDIA'S EASTERN FRONTIER.

85. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Is it a fact that a new supply road is being built on India's eastern frontier, which starts from East

Assam, and may eventually join with the old Burma Road—or the Lashio-Chungking Road—the Burma end of which was lost with the fall of Burma? Americans, Negroes and some tribesmen from the Garo Hills, started work on it in December last year with some of the most modern American road-making equipment; what is the estimated cost of the whole project when completed, and how is it to be shared? What part of it will fall on India's revenues?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: It is a fact that military communications on and beyond the eastern frontier of India are being improved and extended, but it is not in the public interest to give any details. I am unable to answer the latter part of the question beyond saying that it is unlikely that any part of the cost will fall on Indian revenues.

NUMBER OF INDIAN MILITARY ESTATE OFFICERS.

86. THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: (*a*) Will Government state the total number of Indians employed as Military Estate Officers?

(*b*) Will Government also state the total number of Military Estate Officers?

THE HONOURABLE MALIK SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON: (*a*) Six.

(*b*) Seventeen.

ARRIVAL OF SHIP IN INDIA WITH FOODSTUFFS.

87. THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Will Government state—

(*a*) the number of ships with foodstuffs which have arrived in India, and

(*b*) the total amount of foodstuffs which have been imported by them in this country since August last?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: (*a*) and (*b*) Up to the 18th November, 1943, nine ships had arrived with about 54,000 tons of foodgrains. Information about import of other foodstuffs is not readily available.

NUMBER OF RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEES WITH NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS.

88. THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Will Government state the number of Reconstruction Committees, their names and their functions on which non-officials are represented, operating at the Centre at present?

THE HONOURABLE MALIK SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON: With your permission, Sir, I propose to answer both this question and Question No. 102 in the name of the Honourable Mr. Kumar Sankar Ray Chaudhury together.

As regards the scope and functions of the various Reconstruction Committees I invite the Honourable Members' attention to the statement laid on the table of this House by the Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava in reply to Question No. 74 by the Honourable Pandit H. N. Kunzru on the 4th August, 1943. The lists of members of the Policy Committees are not yet complete but the Committees are expected to be fully constituted very shortly.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Will the Honourable Member lay on the table a list of members of the Committees which have been completed? If he cannot do it now, he can do it later.

THE HONOURABLE MALIK SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON: Certainly, when the lists are completed.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: The personnel of some of the Policy Committees has been completed. In the case of those Committees, the lists may be laid on the table.

THE HONOURABLE MALIK SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON: Very well; they will be laid on the table as they are completed.

CONDITION OF SCARCITY AND NUMBER OF DEATHS DUE TO STARVATION IN BENGAL.

89. THE HONOURABLE MR. ALI ASGAR KHAN: (*a*) Is it a fact that famine and food scarcity are prevailing in most of the districts of Bengal in a most acute form and people are dying of starvation in large numbers?

(*b*) If the answer be in the affirmative, will Government give the figures of deaths due to starvation in the different districts of Bengal along with the City of Calcutta up to 31st October, 1943.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: (*a*) It is a fact that conditions of food scarcity prevail in several districts of Bengal and that people are dying of malnutrition and disease.

(*b*) A statement is laid on the table showing the total number of deaths reported in Calcutta, week by week from the beginning of this year till 30th October, 1943. No information is available as to what proportion of these deaths is directly or indirectly attributable to starvation. No accurate information regarding deaths in the different districts in Bengal outside Calcutta is available with the Government of India.

Weekly Total Mortality Occurring in Calcutta during 1943.

Week ending.	1943.	Week ending.	1943.	Week ending.	1943.
2-1-43	571	17-4-43	470	31-7-43	891
9-1-43	534	24-4-43	501	7-8-43	939
16-1-43	446	1-5-43	560	14-8-43	1,057
23-1-43	488	8-5-43	483	21-8-43	1,129
30-1-43	458	15-5-43	524	28-8-43	1,156
6-2-43	518	22-5-43	459	4-9-43	1,183
13-2-43	548	29-5-43	567	11-9-43	1,292
20-2-43	475	5-6-43	496	18-9-43	1,319
27-2-43	490	12-6-43	540	25-9-43	1,492
6-3-43	532	19-6-43	400	2-10-43	1,636
13-3-43	461	26-6-43	621	9-10-43	1,967
20-3-43	519	3-7-43	684	16-10-43	2,154
27-3-43	451	10-7-43	769	23-10-43	2,155
3-4-43	473	17-7-43	757	30-10-43	2,214
10-4-43	442	24-7-43	952		

NUMBER OF DEATHS DUE TO STARVATION IN CALCUTTA.

90. THE HONOURABLE MR. ALI ASGAR KHAN: (*a*) Are Government aware that Calcutta streets are full of homeless starving people and that they are dying in large numbers.

(*b*) Will Government give the figures of such deaths up to 31st October, 1943?

(*c*) What action have Government taken to relieve these people from dying from starvation?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: A statement is laid on the table showing the total number of deaths reported in Calcutta, week by week from the beginning of this year till 30th October, 1943. No information is available as to what proportion of these deaths is directly or indirectly attributable to starvation.

Arrangements were made by the Central Government for the despatch to Bengal by rail and sea, and from overseas, as quickly as possible, of large quantities of foodgrains. In addition the Bengal Government have opened free kitchens, orphanages, poor houses and cheap foodgrain shops for destitute persons, and have arranged for the free distribution of foodgrains, cloth and milk for such persons. Arrangements have also been made for the treatment of destitute persons in hospitals. Test relief schemes have been started for able-bodied persons, and loans granted.

Weekly Total Mortality Occurring in Calcutta during 1943.

Week ending.	1943.	Week ending.	1943.	Week ending.	1943.
2-1-43	571	17-4-43	470	31-7-43	891
9-1-43	534	24-4-43	501	7-8-43	939
16-1-43	446	1-5-43	560	14-8-43	1,057
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6-3-43	532	19-6-43	400	2-10-43	1,636
13-3-43	461	26-6-43	621	9-10-43	1,967
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27-3-43	451	10-7-43	769	23-10-43	2,155
3-4-43	473	17-7-43	757	30-10-43	2,214
10-4-43	442	24-7-43	952		

REQUISITION OF LANDS AND HOMESTEADS BY MILITARY AUTHORITIES.

91. THE HONOURABLE MR. ALI ASGAR KHAN : (*a*) Is it a fact that a pretty good number of families have been rendered homeless owing to requisition by military authorities of their lands and homesteads in different districts of Bengal and that these people have spent all the money they received by way of compensation owing to high prices of foodstuffs and that they are now homeless ?

(*b*) Have Government any scheme to settle such people on lands at other places in order to ease the present difficulties and to save them from starvation ?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF : A certain amount of land in Bengal has been requisitioned by the military authorities but I am not aware of any instances of persons being rendered homeless. I would refer the Honourable Member to the Press Communiqué issued by the Government of India on the 4th August, 1942, describing the procedure to be followed when it becomes necessary to requisition land for military purposes. Although any scheme to settle the evacuated persons is a matter for the Provincial Government, the Central Government have asked the Provincial Governments in such cases to make every effort to provide temporary accommodation and alternative lands and houses for those evacuated.

OPENING OF RESERVE FORESTS AND FALLOW LANDS TO ENSURE SUCCESS OF "GROW MORE FOOD" CAMPAIGN.

92. THE HONOURABLE MR. ALI ASGAR KHAN : In order to ensure the success of "Grow More Food Campaign" do Government contemplate to ask different provinces to open vast forest reserve and fallow lands for cultivation and settlement to the people ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH : The necessity and urgency of bringing fallow lands under cultivation have been impressed upon the Provincial Governments and to assist them in doing so, the Government of India have sanctioned liberal grants in a number of cases. As regards forest reserves these are a national asset the conservation of which is essential for prevention of floods, soil erosion and land utilisation generally in the national interest and it would be an extremely ill conceived and short sighted policy to denude these forests for extension of arable cultivation.

MEASURES TO STOP THE SPREAD OF LEPROSY.

93. THE HONOURABLE MR. ALI ASGAR KHAN : (*a*) Will Government state what precautionary measures have been adopted by Government to stop the spreading of leprosy among general public in train and steamer services and public restaurants and other places and how far the measures have proved a success ?

(*b*) Have Government taken the census of people of different provinces suffering from leprosy ?

(*c*) Will Government give the figures province by province ?

(*d*) Have Government made any arrangement to house these persons at a segregated place ? If so, how many such asylums have been opened and how many people have been admitted so far ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH : (*a*) The Railways Act and the Motor Vehicles Act include provisions to control travelling by persons suffering from infectious diseases and Provincial Municipal Acts generally provide powers for the control of spread of infection in places such as public restaurants. Owing to practical difficulties in the way of inspection and diagnosis it is not possible to enforce the provisions of the law very strictly and it is not possible to assess exactly the degree of success achieved by such legal provisions.

(*b*) and (*c*). A statement is laid on the table.

(*d*) The responsibility for making arrangements to house lepers at segregated places rests with the Provincial Governments. It is understood that there are 81 leprosy in-patient institutions maintained by Governments, local bodies and Missions distributed over the different Provinces. No information is available regarding the exact number of patients at present lodged in these institutions.

Statement showing the number of lepers in Provinces as enumerated in the 1931 census (no census of lepers was taken during 1941 census).

Name of Province.	Total number of lepers. Males.	Females.
Ajmer-Merwara	12	6
Assam	3,864	1,300
Baluchistan	20	4
Bengal	15,290	5,555
Bihar and Orissa	14,408	4,921
Bombay	6,374	2,738
C. P. and Berar	7,341	4,165
Coorg	11	6
Delhi	8	1
Madras	24,842	8,285
N.-W. F. P.	164	85
Punjab	1,326	527
United Provinces	12,013	2,472

SPREADING OF LEPROSY IN BIG CITIES.

94. THE HONOURABLE MR. ALI ASGAR KHAN: (*a*) Are Government aware that the streets of big cities are infested with lepers and there is a chance of spreading the disease among the public?

(*b*) Do Government contemplate to take prompt and immediate steps to stop such occurrences?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: (*a*) It is true that lepers are found in the streets of most big cities and that there is a possibility of spread of infection.

(*b*) The executive and legislative powers necessary for dealing with the problem of beggars with leprosy rest with the Provincial Governments and legislatures. The whole problem of the control of leprosy was considered by a Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Health in 1941 and I shall arrange for a copy of the report to be supplied to the Honourable member.

REPRESENTATION OF THE INDIAN MEDICAL COUNCIL ON THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.

95. THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: (*a*) Will Government state whether it is a fact that no representation has been given in the recently constituted Public Health and Development Committee under the presidentship of Sir Joseph Bhore to the Indian Medical Association which is the premier medical organisation of medical graduates in the country, having 196 branches and 5,909 members of the profession on its roll?

(*b*) Will Government state the reasons for this exclusion?

(*c*) Do Government propose to include some of their representatives now?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) The members of the Health Survey and Development Committee have been selected in their individual capacity and not as representatives of any particular body or association. They include at least two persons who are members of the Indian Medical Association.

COMMITTEE OF ALLIED POWERS FOR REHABILITATION OF DEVASTATED AREAS.

96. THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: Will Government state—

(*a*) whether any committee is going to be set up by the allied powers for the rehabilitation of areas devastated by the present war; if so, what is its object and scope;

(*b*) what part or share, if any, is India going to take in it and on what footing; and

(*c*) whether India will be entitled to get relief from such a committee for the economic and other devastations caused to her by the war?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: (*a*) A United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration has been set up in the United States of America. As regards its object and scope the attention of the Honourable Member is invited to

the Preamble to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agreement, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House.

(*b*) India has signed the Agreement subject to the reservation that the Agreement shall not come into force with respect to India until it has been approved by the Indian Legislature.

(*c*) The Scheme is intended to provide aid to areas liberated by the armed forces of the United Nations or as a consequence of the retreat of the enemy.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Has any quota been fixed for India?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: No, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: With reference to part (*b*) of my question the Honourable Member has replied that the agreement will be ratified by the Indian Legislature. May I know when this ratification will take place?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: It is hoped to submit the agreement for the approval of the Legislature in the next session.

POSITION OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN RELATION TO SOUTH EAST ASIA COMMAND.

97. THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: Will Government state what is its position in relation to the South East Asia Command under Lord Mountbatten as regards—

(*a*) the employment by it of the Indian Army;
(*b*) the provision of supplies of munitions and stores to it; and
(*c*) costs?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: (*a*) The Supreme Commander, South-East Asia Command, will have under his command such units of the Indian Army as may from time to time be placed at his disposal by the Commander-in-Chief, India. The situation in regard to such units will be the same as that obtaining in respect of Indian troops employed in the Middle East or other overseas commands.

(*b*) The South-East Asia Command will place demands on the Government of India which will then with due regard to India's financial and economic position decide whether to arrange provision from Indian or other sources.

(*c*) The financial problems arising out of the establishment of the South-East Asia Command are engaging the closest attention of Government.

CLAIM ON BEHALF OF INDIA FOR TERRITORIES WON FROM THE ENEMIES.

98. THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: Will Government state whether any claim for any territories won from the enemies has been made by anybody on behalf of India; if so, by whom and of what nature?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: No.

RELATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA WITH THE PROVINCES REGARDING FOOD PROBLEM.

99. THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: (*i*) Will Government state what is the present relation it has assumed with the provinces in connection with the country's food problem as regards—

(*a*) import from outside,
(*b*) inflation of currency,
(*c*) employment of soldiers and army stores and medicine,
(*d*) rendering of transport facilities,
(*e*) inter-provincial help and co-operation,
(*f*) supervision and organisation of relief works,
(*g*) punishment and prevention of abuses,
(*h*) prevention of hoarding,
(*i*) making undue profits, and
(*j*) introduction of rationing?

(*ii*) Will Government state the nature of the steps already taken by them on each of the above heads?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: (*a*) Imports of foodgrains from outside are arranged and distributed to Provinces by the Government of India.

(*b*) The meaning of this part of the question is not clear. The Centre has assumed no relation with the Provinces in regard to currency matters.

(*c*) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the statement made at a press conference on Saturday, the 6th November, 1943, by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, and reported in the press.

(*d*) Programmes for the movement of foodgrains from surplus to deficit Provinces are prepared by the Food Department in consultation with the War Transport Department and the Railway Board. These are forwarded to the Regional Controllers of Railway Priorities who make arrangements in consultation with each other and with Regional Food Commissioners and Directors of Food Supplies and with the Railways concerned who carry them out.

Programmes of movement by sea are forwarded to the Bombay Coastal Shipping Committee who berth ships in accordance with a priority direction in which foodgrains are given priority over all other cargoes.

In the case of movements within Provinces, arrangements are made direct between the Director of Food Supplies of the Province and the Regional Controller of Railway Priorities. Such direct arrangements are also made for the inter-Provincial movement of such foodstuffs as are not controlled by the Food Department.

(*e*) The Government of India endeavours to secure the greatest possible mutual help and co-operation by Provincial Governments in food matters. It is part of the functions of the Regional Food Commissioners to secure this co-operation.

(*f*), (*g*) and (*h*) These are all primarily provincial functions of which the Central Government closely supervises the performance.

(*i*) The Government of India have laid down the principle that the cost to be charged by a supplying administration for foodgrains exported by it shall include only the prime cost of the grains *plus* incidental charges up to the point of despatch and an element representing the actual cost of administration and nothing else.

(*j*) The Government of India are urging all administrations to prepare plans for the card rationing of their towns of one lakh and over and are offering technical advice in preparing rationing schemes.

TOTAL MILEAGE OF RAILS TAKEN OUT OF INDIA.

100. THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: Will Government state how many miles of railway, if any, have been taken away from India to countries outside, and what proportion does it bear to the total mileage of railway in India?

THE HONOURABLE SIR SATYENDRA NATH ROY: The total track mileage of rails supplied overseas from Indian Railways is 1,063. This is 1·9 per cent. of the total track mileage of Indian Railways open on 31st March, 1943.

RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED UPON SHIPS ON THE INDIAN REGISTER.

101. THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: Will Government state whether ships under the Indian register have been subjected to any restrictions which do not apply to ships under the British register in connection with the coastal trade of India? If so, what are these restrictions?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: In view of the necessity for ensuring the best possible utilisation of available shipping and for securing priority for essential cargo such as foodgrains, vessels on the Indian Register which are not on requisition to Government have recently been subjected to a scheme of licensing. This control has not been extended to vessels on the British Register because all such vessels have already been requisitioned by His Majesty's Government and operate under the direct control of Ministry of War Transport.

SCOPE AND COMPOSITION OF POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEES.

*102. THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: Will Government state the scope and composition of the various post-war reconstruction committees, if any, set up by them in India?

* For answer to this Question, *see* answer to Question No. 88.

SCHEME FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL IN INDIA.

103. THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: Has the Educational Adviser to the Government of India submitted any scheme for the advancement of the educational level of India? If so, what is its substance?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: 1. Yes. A brief summary of the scheme, prepared by the Educational Adviser to the Government of India, for Post-war Educational Development in India which was placed before the Central Advisory Board of Education last month is laid on the table.

2. The scheme has generally been approved by the Central Advisory Board of Education at a special session at Dehra Dun last month. The views of the Inter-University Board on matters relating to university education are awaited. The Board will consider the views of the Inter-University Board at its annual meeting in January, 1944 at Baroda and then formulate its final proposals. It is proposed to submit the recommendations of the Central Advisory Board of Education to the Reconstruction Committee early next year.

A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION FOR INDIA.

PRIMARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS FOR 52 MILLION PUPILS IN FORTY YEARS.

20-YEAR PROGRAMME OF ADULT EDUCATION.

The outlines of a scheme for a national system of education which will provide all the children of India with a certain basic education and enable those who show promise to pass on to high schools, universities, technical, commercial and art institutions are contained in a Memorandum prepared by Mr. John Sargent, Educational Adviser to the Government of India, and discussed by the Central Advisory Board of Education at a special meeting held at Dehra Dun on October 13, 14 and 15. According to Mr. Sargent, the scheme aims at no more than has been achieved already in Britain and other countries of the West and is the minimum for which India ought to plan in the postwar period of reconstruction. Such a system for British India alone, he estimates, will cost by the time it is fully established Rs. 323 crores annually of which Rs. 277 crores will probably have to come out of public funds. When it is borne in mind that in 1940-41 out of a total expenditure on education of about Rs. 30 crores, Rs. 17¼ crores came from public funds, the magnitude of the expansion envisaged will be realised.

As Mr. Sargent points out in his Foreword, his Memorandum embodies the main proposals contained in the reports of various committees appointed by the Central Advisory Board since 1935 and is in fact something like a patch-work quilt in which material from the Board's reports is held together by his own ideas and suggestions. In recent years committees appointed by the Board have reported on such matters as basic, primary and middle education, women's education, adult education, the physical welfare of school children, school buildings, social service, examinations, and the recruitment, training and salaries of teachers.

BASIC EDUCATION.

Naturally the most important part of Mr. Sargent's scheme is that relating to Basic (Primary and Middle) Education—a system of universal, compulsory and free education for all boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 14. The instruction to be provided should follow the lines of education through various activities laid down in reports already adopted by the Board. He suggests that, while the majority of the pupils should go through the complete course, children of ability and promise should be enabled at the end of the Primary or Junior Basic stage to enter high schools and other institutions for higher education. A vast increase in the number of women teachers is envisaged and certain minimum standards of training, recruitment and service conditions for teachers should be adopted and enforced everywhere. It is estimated that the cost of such a system of universal elementary education for British India would be Rs. 200 crores a year. This would call for 1·8 million teachers to instruct 52 million pupils.

NURSERY SCHOOLS.

India now has hardly any facilities for nursery schools or classes but a proper system of kindergarten instruction is an essential part of any national system of education. Mr. Sargent suggests that in urban areas separate nursery schools or departments should be provided, while elsewhere where there are not sufficient children nursery classes should be attached to Primary Schools. Kindergarten work should invariably be in the hands of women teachers trained for the purpose. Such instruction should be free and every effort should be made to persuade parents to send their children to school, particularly in areas where housing conditions are bad or mothers have to go out to work.

HIGH SCHOOLS.

On the subject of High Schools education Mr. Sargent calculates that roughly one child in every five will be able, with profit, to enter the High School stage of education. As high schools will be largely dependent on public funds, entry to such schools should be on a selective basis, only those pupils being admitted who are likely to profit by the instruction imparted. A system of scholarships, stipends and free places should ensure that no poor child of any ability is excluded. The high schools in Mr. Sargent's scheme will be of two types—academic and technical—but both should aim at giving a good all-round education and preparing pupils in the later stages for their future careers. Curricula should be as varied as possible and university and examination requirements should not be the deciding factor.

Weaknesses of University system.

In the chapter dealing with university education reference is made to certain weaknesses of the prevailing system. India has not too many universities for a country of her size and population, but the trouble is that the proportion of students in Indian universities as compared to the school-going population is high which shows that in India "the super-structure of the educational system has been allowed to develop before the main building has been erected on broad and sound foundations." To raise standards all round Mr. Sargent suggests here too that the conditions for admission should be revised to ensure that all students admitted will benefit from a university course and he expects that his proposed reorganisation of the High School system will facilitate this. As in the high schools, adequate assistance must be provided for poor students.

Regarding courses of study and methods of teaching in universities, the anomalous position of the Intermediate stage in Indian university education is criticised and a three-year degree course, with the Intermediate course covered in the High School stage (as has been adopted in Delhi), is advocated. The extension of the tutorial system and closer personal contacts between teachers and students as well as steps to improve conditions of service of teaching staffs so as to attract men and women of the requisite quality are other reforms advocated.

Mr. Sargent anticipates that the creation of a national system of high schools will call for a university system with 240,000 seats, or double the present capacity of India's universities. An Indian University Commission is advocated to co-ordinate the activities of different universities and eliminate overlapping or dispersion of effort.

Technical Instruction.

Technical (including commercial) education is an important service and it is suggested that in view of the difficulties in the way of organising it on a provincial basis, it should be controlled at any rate in its higher stages by an all-India body called the National Council for Technical Education and that the cost should be borne by the Government of India. Prospective post-war developments make the establishment of an efficient system of technical instruction a matter of the greatest importance and agricultural education is not the least important branch of technical instruction. The technical high school is an important new idea aiming at giving an all-round education with a technical bias for pupils of ability so as to satisfy the aptitudes of those who want a practical course and the needs of industry and commerce for intelligent young workers. But apart from technical high schools, technical instruction should meet the needs of five classes of industrial workers—the managerial class, research workers, the supervisory class, skilled artisans and semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

A twenty-year campaign to deal with illiteracy among adults preceded by five years of preparation is envisaged by Mr. Sargent in his survey of the problem of adult education. Such a campaign is particularly important in India with its very high percentage of illiterates, but literacy is not an end in itself. To an increasing degree as illiteracy is reduced education in a fuller sense should be provided for those who become literate. Here, as in all branches of education, a big problem will be the securing of teachers and, while the main responsibility is the State's, the help of voluntary organisations where they are available will have to the enlisted.

Wanted Two Million Teachers.

The great increase in the number of schools will call for an enormous stepping up of the output of trained teachers and India's existing institutions are only sufficient to provide for replacements among existing teachers. India will require ultimately over two million non-graduate teachers and 180,000 graduates for high schools, and new training schools and colleges must be provided to meet this need. Suitable pupils from high schools must be picked—particularly from girls' high schools. No fees should be charged and poor students should be helped liberally. Teachers, especially those in remote rural areas, should be able to take refresher courses.

Medical Attention and Physical Education.

On the subject of school medical services and physical education, Mr. Sargent takes his stand on the findings of a Joint Committee appointed in 1941 by the Central Advisory Boards of Health and Education. The medical inspection of children is of little value unless linked up with the treatment of defects discovered and arrangements for following up cases where necessary. The provision of midday meals in schools is a step towards combating malnutrition, while better personal hygiene can be taught both by example and precept in schools. Physical training should be given to all children. Mr. Sargent calculates that India's school-going population will need 7,500 school medical officers and 15,000 nurses to run an efficient school medical service.

Education of Defectives.

So far what has been done for the education of mentally and physically handicapped children in India has been almost always due to voluntary effort. Provision for them should, however form part of the State system of education. As far as possible handicapped children should be trained in ordinary schools; resort to special schools should be limited to cases where it is essential. The blind and the deaf need special educational arrangements and special teachers. The handicapped should always be trained for remunerative employment and an effort should be made to find such employment for them.

A National Youth Movement to provide recreative and social activities for young people, specially those between 14 and 20 who are no longer in school, should be set up. This movement should not try to supersede existing organisations such as the Y. M. C. A. and the Ramakrishna Mission, but should co-ordinate their activities and extend their range. Mr. Sargent suggests that leaders for such a movement might be found among carefully selected demobilised men.

Employment bureaux under the control of the education departments and staffed by trained experts with experience of teaching and of industrial conditions should be maintained in the provinces. They are specially necessary in India because of the restricted openings at the moment for progressive employment. Such bureaux should be responsible for those leaving all types of schools; universities should preferably have their own employment bureaux.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Will the Honourable the Education Member consider the desirability of publishing the entire Memorandum of Mr. Sargent so that those who are interested in educational reconstruction may have a complete view of the picture? It is an excellent Memorandum judging from the summary which has appeared in the Press but some of us would like to read it in detail. Will the Honourable Member consider the desirability of publishing it?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: I will certainly consider it as soon as it assumes final form.

TRANSFER OF FAMINE RELIEF, ETC., FROM THE PROVINCES TO THE CENTRE.

104. THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: Do Government contemplate taking steps for the transfer of the subjects of famine relief, agriculture, irrigation, river communication, and education and health or any of them from provincial to central control?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: No, Sir.

INFORMATION PROMISED IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS LAID ON THE TABLE.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. S. A. HYDARI (Industries and Civil Supplies Secretary): Sir, I lay on the table statements containing the information promised in reply to question No. 54 asked on the 3rd August, 1943.

20s. COUNT YARN.

STATEMENT No. (1).

Question (i) (a).—The Price and Quantities purchased directly by the Supply Department in each month of 1942 and 1943

1942.				1943.			
Month.	Quantity.	Price per 10 lbs.		Month.	Quantity.	Price per 10 lbs.	
	(lbs.)	Rs. A. P.			(lbs.)	Rs. A. P.	
January ...	...	...		January . Weaving .	4,800	10 11 0	
February . Hosiery .	32,000	9 5 0		February . Weaving .	67,300	12 9 6	
				Hosiery .	53,000	12 9 6	
March . Hosiery .	32,000	9 5 0		March . Weaving .	210,200	12 9 6	
Weaving .	37,200	8 8 0		Hosiery .	53,000	12 9 6	
" .	60,000	8 4 6		" .	50,000	13 9 6	(Cones).
" .	60,000	9 0 0					
April . Hosiery .	80,000	9 5 0		April . Weaving .	157,500	12 9 6	
				Hosiery .	54,000	12 9 6	
				" .	50,000	13 9 6	(Cones).
May . Hosiery .	80,000	9 5 0		May . Weaving .	142,500	16 13 0	
Weaving .	800,000	8 3 6		Hosiery .	53,000	16 13 0	
				" .	100,000	17 13 0	(Cones).
June . Weaving .	800,000	8 3 6		June . Weaving .	142,500	16 13 0	
Hosiery .	80,000	9 5 0		Hosiery .	53,000	16 13 0	
				" .	100,000	17 13 0	(Cones).
July . Hosiery .	78,000	9 5 0		July . Weaving .	142,700	16 13 0	
Weaving .	800,000	8 3 6		Hosiery .	54,000	16 13 0	
				" .	200,000	17 13 0	(Cones).
August . Weaving .	800,000	9 3 0		August . Weaving .	6,400	16 8 9	
September . Weaving .	800,000	9 3 0		September to December ...	...	...	
October . Weaving .	800,000	9 3 0					
November	...	...					
December	...	...					
	5,339,200 lbs.				1,693,900 lbs.		

STATEMENT No. (2).

Question (i) (b).—The Quantity utilised in India and sent outside in the first six months of 1942 and 1943.

January/June 1942.			January/June 1943.	
Quantity utilised in India . . .	*Nil.*		Quantity utilised in India—	
			Hosiery . .	66,000 lbs.
			Weaving . .	185,600 lbs.
Sent outside India—			Sent outside India—	
Weaving .	157,200 lbs.	Actually sent out.	Hosiery . .	500,000 lbs.
	1,600,000 lbs.	For China (Stored in India).		
Hosiery .	304,000 lbs.		Weaving . .	539,200 lbs.
	2,061,200 lbs.			1,290,800 lbs.

STATEMENT No. (3).

Question (i) (c). The Quantity of yarn manufactured in India in this period.

	1942. (lbs.)	1943. (lbs.)	
January	20,664,000	19,398,000	
February	18,774,000	16,079,000	
March	17,439,000	19,179,000	
April	16,993,000	19,150,000	
May	18,265,000	19,049,000	
June	18,358,000	19,075,000	
July	19,513,000	...	Not available.
August	13,848,000	...	
September	11,595,000	...	
October	12,434,000	...	
November	18,052,000	...	
December	20,066,000	...	

NOTE.—Figures from July 1942 are provisional and subject to revision and are for 20s. yarn only.

STATEMENT No. (4).

Question (ii). Has any effort been made to substitute coir or jute yarns for cotton yarns in the specification of Supply Department goods, if so, what are the items and since when has this been done?

1942.		1943.	
January/June—		January/June—	
Jute Union Canvas	1,655,360 lbs.	Jute Union Canvas	1,229,760 lbs.
		,, Cloth	20,574,400 lbs.
		,, Cordage	3,353,280 lbs.
July/December—		July/December—	
Jute Cloth	26,461,120 lbs.	Jute Union Canvas	1,583,680 lbs.
,, Cordage	4,379,200 lbs.	,, Cloth	Not known.
,, Union Canvas	1,955,520 lbs.	,, Cordage	

Jute for Cordage and Webbing.

1942.	1943.	
Figures not available as fabricators made their own arrangements.	February/August—	
	Webbing	4,229,324 lbs.
	Cordage	4,030,096 lbs.
	September/December—	
	Coir Cordage	62,720 lbs.
	Jute Cordage	277,760 lbs.
	,, Webbing	293,440 lbs.

BILLS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY LAID ON THE TABLE.

SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL : Sir, in pursuance of rule 25 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I lay on the table copies of the following Bills which were passed by the Legislative Assembly at its meeting held on the 17th November, 1943, namely :—

A Bill further to amend the Indian Tea Control Act, 1938, and

A Bill further to amend the Indian Companies Act, 1913.

MOTION *RE* FOOD SITUATION.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : (Nominated Official) : Sir, I beg to move :

"That the food situation in India be taken into consideration."

Sir, India to-day is over-shadowed by a grim tragedy. Questions are naturally being asked why such a tragedy should have happened to a country which is so nearly self-sufficient in her food requirements, why such a calamity was not anticipated by Government, what Government are doing now to bring the situation under control.

Sir, for the beginning of this tragedy one must go back to the days when with the sweeping advance of the enemy first in the Far East and then in Burma, the sense of security enjoyed by the people of India for generation under the British rule received its first rude shock.

Bengal felt the shock most being nearest of all to the advancing enemy, having to receive hundreds of thousands of refugees of all classes of life in destitution and misery. The apprehension among the people was aggravated by the fear of an impending invasion of the Coastal districts, which necessitated military measures, such as, removal of excess foodgrains from the danger zone (though the quantity actually removed was less than 40,000 tons) and of boats which are practically the only means of transport in the Coastal districts. Then came one of the worst cyclones in Bengal's history which killed over 15,000 people and nearly 100,000 heads of cattle, and destroyed human habitations over thousands of square miles and also one of the worst fungus epidemics on record which along with the cyclone destroyed over a million tons of Bengal's ripening crops. Expectation of imports from Burma had

[Mr. B. R. Sen.]

in the past acted as a steadying factor in conditions of local scarcity in Bengal. The panic created by the feeling that nothing was to come from Burma and little from anywhere else, in the midst of this destruction, finally tipped the balance. Frantic purchase followed by traders and consumers, and hoarding by cultivators, traders and consumers alike. The bombing of Chittagong and other areas in East Bengal and of Calcutta did little to allay the panic. The price of rice within a few weeks of the December harvest (1942) shot up to ten times the pre-war level.

What did Government do during this time to keep the situation under control. The Honourable Members must have seen the comprehensive statement of the late Food Member the Honourable Sir A. Haque on the subject, which he made during the last session of the Assembly. I will not recapitulate here in detail the measures taken by the Government of India previous to the creation of the Food Department except to say that the representatives of Provinces attending the Price Control Conferences since the outbreak of War right up to the end of 1942 had consistently refused to have any control over the price of rice or to agree to building up of stocks by Provinces for fear of choking up the flow of foodgrains. The Food Department was created in December, 1942. The first action of the Department was to draw up a procurement plan to distribute the deficiencies all over India so that the surplus provinces may take their share of the general deficiency on an all-India basis and the deficit provinces may not be left to face their shortages alone. The Second Food Conference held in February, 1943 revealed no unanimity as to who should determine the quantity that should be surrendered by a Province to deficit areas. A Basic Plan was drawn up on the principle that the annual requirements of each foodgrain of a Province should not exceed the lowest figure during the three years immediately preceding the War. By the beginning of May, the situation in Bengal assumed alarming proportions. There was an acute shortage of rice in the markets and it seemed that unless some desperate steps were taken a collapse of the civil life of the province was inevitable. Free trade was, therefore, introduced in the whole of the north-east region comprising Orissa, Bihar, Bengal and Assam. It was hoped that free trade would not only bring in a flow of supplies to the deficit areas, but will also stabilise on a parity the price levels in the entire region. I shall not relate the events in detail which followed the introduction of Free Trade. It was resisted by all the three surplus provinces, but at any rate it saved Calcutta from a sure disaster. The Third Food Conference held in July definitely declared against any form of free trade and recommended reversion to the original procurement plan, with arithmetical adjustments, functioning under the Government of India, but with purchasing organisations under the Provincial Governments. The Government of India accepted the recommendation ; though the view is still held in some quarters that so long as the Eastern region is not treated as one homogeneous economic block as in normal times, local deficiencies met normally from across the provincial borders cannot be rectified and normal conditions in deficit provinces as a whole cannot be restored. There was also opposition to the formula for calculating the requirements of a Province adopted in the Basic Plan. The Plan had therefore to be revised. The original Basic Plan had achieved the distribution of 1,240,000 tons of foodgrains in 7½ months. The Revised Plan was drawn up on the basis of surpluses declared by the Provinces and States. The surpluses declared were naturally estimated by the Provinces on rather a conservative basis. The reasons were the inadequacy of existing procurement arrangements and the cautious policy which some administrations felt bound to follow until their own domestic position had been secured by the building up of reserve stocks or otherwise. The Government of India accepted these surpluses as declared but hoped that as procurement arrangements became more efffcient and as with the approach of the new harvests sufficiency in the producing areas became increasingly assured, there would be a progressive improvement on the quotas shown in the Basic Plan. At the same time the Government of India appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. H. D. Vigor later replaced by Sir Theodore Gregory, to examine the past policy and present position in India in relation to the supply, distribution and price of foodgrains, and to make recommen-

dations both of policy, and for administration, for securing for the duration of the War maximum supply, equitable distribution and proper control of prices in relation to foodgrains.

The Revised Basic Plan came into operation from the 1st of August. The Plan aimed at distribution of 1,400,000 tons of foodgrains from surplus to deficit areas within 8 months from August to March 1944. During 3 months of its operation August to October, the deficit areas have received over 6½ lakh tons of food grains. Throughout this period we have endeavoured to remove progressively the differences between the Centre and the Provincial Governments and I am happy to state that we have reached a very large common measure of agreement about the imperative necessity of taking effective and speedy measures for bringing relief to the situation. The supplying administrations are increasingly realising their responsibilities and most of them have co-operated willingly with the Government of India in fulfilling the quota programme allotted to them. The additional surpluses which have since been voluntarily declared by the Provinces and States, outside the quotas in the Revised Basic Plan, have amounted to over 220,000 tons out of a total so far distributed of 772,000 tons. The principal recipients of the quantities despatched during the period have been Bengal 300,300 tons, Bombay 84,200 tons, Madras 79,200 tons, Travancore/Cochin 51,600 tons and Deccan States 6,500 tons. One will be inclined to ask how far these distributions under the Old and Revised Basic Plans which already total over 2 million tons have actually helped to relieve distress in deficit areas. Take the case of Bengal.

The statistical deficit in rice in Bengal this year amounted to about 1·3 million tons. This deficit was however to some extent covered by the carry over from the previous year. The total quantity despatched to Bengal up to the end of October is 540,000 tons. This however forms only 6% of the total requirement of Bengal.

*THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU (United Provinces Northern : Non-Mohammadan) : Could the Honourable Member tell us to what extent the shortage of 1·3 million tons in 1942-43 was compensated for by the carry over from the previous year ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : Sir, it is very difficult to say what the carry over was but our rough estimate is about 1½ million tons.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : From 1941-42? That means that there was no actual deficit.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : As I said, it is almost impossible to say what the carry over was but on the production of the previous year we feel that the carry over must have been very large.

If, as it happened, the entire normal marketable surplus of the local produce which this year formed 87% of the total requirement was not available for general consumption, a supply of 6% of the requirement from outside could not possibly make a decisive difference to the situation. The key to the problem in Bengal is, therefore, not so much what we can send from outside—and even under the most favourable conditions we can send only limited quantities compared to the total production which is available within the province—but the extent to which we are able to restore public confidence which has yet to recover from the shocks it has received, and get the marketable surplus of the local produce resume its normal flow. By advancing this argument, I do not however mean that the Government of India have any intention of relaxing their efforts in despatching supplies to the deficit areas but I do like to impress upon the House the necessity of the matter being viewed in a correct perspective.

I shall now say a few words about Government policy with particular reference to the recommendations of the Committee presided over by Sir Theodore Gregory.

In his speech before the Assembly during the last session the late Food Member Sir Azizul Huque said that the policy which the Government of India had followed since the beginning of the War was to attempt to evolve a common price policy and to co-ordinate the necessary measures that might be taken by the Provincial authorities to meet the exigencies of the War situation. " We have ", he said, " to work under a constitution under which the provinces function as autonomous units with responsibilities of their areas within their own sphere and this is true as

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Mr. B. R. Sen.]

much of the ministerial province as of the Section 93 provinces. And we have no right to interfere in matters within the scope of provincial responsibilities..... (Again) the Government of India have no administrative agency of their own and must necessarily depend on the Provinces and their established administrative machinery to carry out any common planning or programme in the food problem of India. They can only enforce all common measures through understanding and agreement with the Provinces and States ".

Sir, we have since then made a fundamental departure from this policy. The Honourable the Food Member Sir Jwala Prasad stated the new policy in these words in his opening speech at the All India Food Conference last month : " Whatever may have been the case in normal times, what goes on in each province or State in the matter of production, distribution and utilisation of food supply can no longer be regarded as the undivided concern of that Province or State.....in the mobilization of India's resources the Government of India will have to take, and implement, decisions which may, at times, conflict with what appear to be local or sectional interests.....We can no longer afford either failure or the prospect of failure, and I, in the discharge of the duty which is mine, shall not hesitate to exercise whatever degree of superintendence and control at every stage may be necessary, or to invoke and use whatever powers are essential to ensure success ". Sir, I can assure the Honourable Members of the House that the Government of India propose to implement this policy.

On the question of procurement, the Government of India intend to examine the possibility of establishing central foodgrains monopoly which is recognised to be the only completely satisfactory solution but quite impracticable at present. Meanwhile procurement for domestic requirements and for export must continue to be carried out by local Government agencies under general central supervision. The Government of India does not insist on uniformity but on efficiency, and reserves the right to suggest improvements or, in the last resort, to issue directions.

As to statutory price control, the view of the Government of India is that it is not possible to have all India statutory prices at present, but price control must be built up first on provincial then on regional basis until efficient distribution supported by imports from abroad enable Government to regain control of stocks sufficient to influence the market. Meanwhile, provinces are permitted to enforce statutory control or ceiling prices appropriate to local conditions but subject to Central Government's approval.

The Government of India also regard the introduction of full urban rationing as fundamental to any co-ordinated food plan.

Seven cardinal points of our policy—

(1) Stoppage of exports.
(2) Maximum possible imports.
(3) Association of public with the work of food.
(4) Price control.
(5) Rationing.
(6) Enforcement of Foodgrains Control Order.
(7) Efficient procurement under the supervision of Centre.

Sir, in the Press and in the other House it has been said that the Government of India have no policy. I would like to state categorically that Government have a policy and their policy is this : stoppage of exports, maximum possible imports, association of the public with the work of food, price control, rationing, enforcement of Foodgrains Control Order, efficient procurement under the supervision of the Centre.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : What about inflation ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : Inflation is a subject which I am not competent to deal with. The Honourable Member representing the Finance Department will, I believe, speak, if necessary.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (Bihar : Non-Muhammadan) : Will the Honourable Member say from what date there has been no export ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : Exports of foodgrains were stopped from the month of July.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA : But you said that you realised the situation in May.

(No reply.)

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : Sir, I have just stated the cardinal points about policy.

The two other important questions on which the Government of India have formulated a definite policy are exports and imports of foodgrains. We have accepted the recommendation of the Committee that India must cease to be a net exporter of foodstuffs.

The only exceptions that we shall permit in future will be the export of small quantities of foodgrains for provisioning ships sailing from Indian ports and for the use of the Indian seamen of the merchant navy, also small quantities for the use of vital personnel on our air lines of communications in countries adjacent to India, and for a few isolated communities in neighbouring countries, who cannot obtain their essential foodgrains except from us.

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY (East Bengal : Non-Muhammadan) : What about global war charges and Persian supplies ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : That is included in " for a few isolated communities in neighbouring countries who cannot obtain their essential foodgrains except from us ".

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY : What about global war charges ?

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS : What does it mean ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY : I do not myself know ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : I am sorry I do not know either what it means.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER : Is it confined to..... ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Order, order.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : The total quantity involved in these small exports will be less than 1,000 tons a month and in the import calculations this factor will be taken into account.

On the question of imports, we have accepted the recommendation of the Committee that we must press His Majesty's Government for imports to create a Central Reserve which should not be less than 500,000 tons, that this Reserve is absolutely necessary to enable the Centre to meet emergencies, control markets and restore public confidence.

In addition we require one million tons per annum to cover the estimated loss of average net imports of the last five years. I may add that the supreme necessity of imports for filling up the gap in India's food supply has for some time past been continuously pressed by us on His Majesty's Government and His Majesty's Government have already allocated a certain amount of shipping and we have since last month received over 45,000 tons of wheat from overseas. We expect to receive far greater quantities within the next few months.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHOWDHURY (West Bengal : Non-Muhammadan) : Is it the Honourable Member's case that taking into account the carry-over of last year and the imports there is no deficit but a surplus ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : It is not possible for any one to calculate the carry-over. The carry-over remains in the houses of individual people. But on the actual produce of the crop of the previous year we believe there has been a carry-over——.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHOWDHURY : Then there must be a surplus to cover imports and the carry-over.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : I have not said that there was a surplus. I simply said there was a carry-over.

[Mr. B. R. Sen.]

Sir, I have so far dwelt largely on the food situation in Bengal. If I have done so it is not because Government of India are not with equal care and anxiety watching the situation in other seriously deficit areas in India such as Travancore/Cochin, Deccan States and Bombay, the ceded districts of Madras and the cyclone affected districts of Orissa and taking all possible relief measures for them. If there is any misgiving in any quarter on this point, I would like to dispel it. These Provinces and States have shown what resolute and efficient administrations can do to meet a crisis of this nature. Normally Bombay imported about one-fourth of her rice and wheat requirements. Travancore/Cochin were dependent on imports to the extent of 50 to 60% of their rice requirements which is the principal food of the population. Madras was short of rice, gram and wheat by over 500,000 tons *i.e.* 7%. Inspite of these deficiencies, Bombay has kept the situation well under control and has shown the way in India of a satisfactory rationing scheme. Madras has not only maintained her food position on a remarkably even keel but has also spared for Ceylon over a lakh tons of rice—these exports have since been stopped—and also substantial quantities for Mysore, Hyderabad and Travancore/Cochin. While Travancore/Cochin faced with the loss of half of her normal food requirements have introduced rationing not only in urban but also in rural areas, have through State monopoly acquired practically all the marketable surplus of grain throughout their area, and have put down profiteering and hoarding with a heavy hand. Sir, these Provinces and States deserve from their countrymen the fullest recognition of their high sense of duty and of their efficiency and the Government of India are not going to let them down.

12½ NOON.

*THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Does this appreciation apply to the Orissa Government also?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: You might have noticed that I have said nothing about Orissa.

Sir, what of the immediate future? The area which naturally is causing the most anxiety is Bengal. On a review of the Bengal situation, H. E. the Governor of Bengal recently indicated that if 250,000 tons of foodgrains could be delivered to Bengal in three months October to December, Bengal would be able to turn the corner. By that time the main crop will have arrived. Sir, we have already planned for the despatch of this quantity and I am glad to be able to say that the planned quota for October of about 82,000 tons was actually despatched to Bengal. Indeed, we have every hope that our despatches will substantially exceed the target figure given by H. E. the Governor of Bengal. Along with the despatch of increased quantities of foodgrains, the Government of India have interested themselves in the question of improvement of transport facilities for distribution in the districts. The House is aware of the visit of H. E. the Viceroy to Bengal within a few days of his arrival in India and the action which followed H. E.'s visit. The House is also aware of the help of H. E. the Commander-in-Chief has given and is giving in assisting the Provincial Government with experienced officers, staff and troops in the difficult task of distribution of foodgrains from Calcutta to the districts and administration of medical relief. Sir, we have in the past known the work of the Army in India in aid of civil power in other spheres. The kind of aid that the civil power in India is now getting from the Army, in the midst of their urgent and pressing preoccupations, is one which could come only from Soldiers with imagination and humanity. India must owe a deep debt of gratitude to H. E. the Viceroy and H. E. the Commander-in-Chief. (*Applause.*)

Sir, I am afraid I have already taken a good deal of the time of the House though I have not been able to deal with many important points which must be in the minds of the Honourble Members. I propose to deal with them in my reply to the debate. I must however refer to one point before I close which in my view is of paramount importance. Bengal this year is going to have a record crop. The average annual requirement of rice of Bengal before the War including imports was 8·86 million tons; this year the total rice crop is expected to be about 10·0 million tons. On such a crop there should not be any scarcity in Bengal in 1944. But, as I have explained, the major trouble in Bengal has been not so much an intrinsic shortage of

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

essential foodgrains as a breakdown in public confidence. Unless and until there is a return of public confidence generally in Bengal—

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA : Breakdown of public confidence—in whom ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The situation is not likely to improve to any appreciable extent inspite of an intrinsic sufficiency of foodgrains. How is that confidence to be restored ? As is obvious, it is largely a psychological factor—in dealing with which the public leaders of the country and the Press can be of invaluable help to Government. Sir, as I have said, the Government of India have taken upon themselves their responsibility for the proper mobilisation of India's resources and in doing so have announced their determination to exercise whatever degree of superintendence and control at every stage may be necessary or to invoke and use whatever powers are essential to ensure success. But such a responsibility the Government of India can hardly discharge with any degree of success, unless they have in their task the fullest co-operation from the public and the Press. May I, Sir, through this House make an earnest appeal to the public leaders and to the Press all over India and particularly in Bengal to give us their unreserved co-operation if only to save Bengal from a continuation of the present tragedy ? (*Applause.*)

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Motion made :—

" That the food situation in India be taken into consideration. "

I may, however, inform Honourable Members that I have this morning received notices from two Honourable Members suggesting certain amendments to this Motion. I will not take up the time of the Council at this stage by reading these amendments, but I have asked our Secretary to circulate these amendments to Honourable Members immediately so that they may be in possession of full information on the subject.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern : Non-Muhammadan) : What will happen to these amendments ? Will they be moved now, so that the debate on the Motion and on the amendments may go on simultaneously ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The usual practice, when notice of an amendment is given in time is for the President to ask the Honourable Members to speak both on his amendment and on the general Motion. But in this case as it is a very important debate, I will permit the Honourable Members, especially the proposers of the amendments, to saya few words on the amendments if necessary after thay have taken part in the debate on the general Motion.

*THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR (Madras : Muhammadan) : Will those Honourable Members who have spoken on the main Motion be given another opportunity to express their views on the amendments ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Not all Honourable Members. Only the proposers of the amendments will get a further opportunity to say a few words if necessary on the particular amendment being moved.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR : What about the views of the Honourable Members who are not sponsors of the amendments ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I am afraid you have not understood me. I cannot enlighten you any further.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR : Would it not be better if you are pleased to allow the amendments to be read just now?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The amendments have not been seen by Honourable Members. I must give them an opportunity to study the amendments so that they may be able to discuss them properly.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa: Muhammadan): May I suggest that the time for amendments may be given till tomorrow as was done

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

in the Assembly so that those who wish to give further amendments may do so tomorrow ? The amendments might be moved formally.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Honourable Members had so many days to make up their minds and to send me as many amendments as they liked but they have not done so hitherto. I have received notice of only 2 amendments this morning, one by the Honourable Mr. Sapru and the other jointly signed by the Honourable Mr. Parker and the Honourable Mr. Burder. I do not wish to shut out any Honourable Member. If he sends in an amendment and if I see it is a very proper amendment, I shall certainly allow it.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I wish to suggest that the amendments might be formally moved without a speech and then we can discuss the whole subject.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : When the debate is concluded I shall decide how to allow these amendments to be moved and which amendments would be allowed to be moved.

THE HONOURABLE MR HOSSAIN IMAM : The speech and the amendment might go together. The amendment might then formally be read and discussions continued.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : That is what I said at the beginning. The usual course is for an Honourable Member to speak on the original proposition of the Honourable Mr. Sen as well as on the amendment. But, unfortunately, the amendments have been sent in too late in the day and therefore I have no other alternative but to adopt the course which I have suggested.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO (Nominated : Non-Official) : Sir, we have listened to the speech of the Honourable Member in which he has stated not only the policy of the Food Department but he has also very rightly defended the part which the Government of India played in the——

*THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : May I suggest, Sir, that the amendments of which notice has already been received should be read out to the House ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : If that is the wish, I will read them. The Honourable Mr. Sapru's notice runs as follows :—

"I beg to give notice that I shall move the following amendment to the motion on Food to be debated by the Council of State on the 18th November, 1943. Add to motion :—

'and that having done so this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that he may be pleased to appoint an impartial commission presided over by a high judicial dignitary to enquire into the cause which have brought about the food crisis in Bengal and other parts of India and for responsibility for the present situation in Bengal and report in the adequacy or otherwise of the steps taken to prevent and relieve distress'."

The other amendment is the one given by the Honourable Mr Parker and the Honourable Mr. Burder jointly. That amendment runs thus :—

"That to the motion the following be added, namely :—

'And that this House is of opinion that at a suitable date an enquiry should take place to examine the whole question of the food shortage in India and in particular in Bengal. The enquiry should be conducted by a suitable body of the type of a Royal Commission and its personnel should be completely outside the field of Indian politics. Its terms of reference should cover a full examination of the present food shortage and the making of recommendations to prevent the recurrence of the existing distress'."

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO : Sir, the real position has been explained in detail as to the part played by the Government of India to the Bengal famine. The primary need is not to argue and make speeches or to cry down particular individuals or organisations but to lay down broad principles and to act upon those principles. If this is done, a great deal of friction in the country would be avoided. At present the Bengal problem is difficult to understand to a fair mind. Bengal in 1941 and 1942 had a normal crop and in the beginning of 1943 we had a deficit of 1 million tons.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Did you have a bumper crop in 1941-42 or 1942-43 ?

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Order, order. Will you please not disturb the Honourable Member ?

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: He said there was a bumper crop in 1942.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You know we have got a long debate before us and if all these disturbances take place we will not be able to make progress. I think the Honourable Member (Sir A. P. Patro) may be allowed to have his own say and then, when speaking yourself, you might put the questions.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I wanted to know what he meant. The crop is ready in December-January.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: The rice harvest in 1941 and 1942 was exceptionally good.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: December, 1942 or January, 1942 ? That is what I want to know from you.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: That is a statement made by Sir John Anderson, *ex*-Governor of Bengal.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: When was this statement made ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: It was given in the House of Commons. So, 1941 and 1942 were good years and at all times there will be a deficit of about 4 per cent., not more than that. At the beginning of this year there was a deficit of 1 million tons and this has been flowing into Bengal for the purpose of relieving the distress that has been prevailing there. The Bengal deficit is 14 per cent. of the total production of the Province and much more than a million ton has already been imported into Bengal. Why then the poor in the towns and villages have been subjected to starvation and death and why thousands of them are dying is a problem. What became of the food that was imported ? Therefore, the question is not so much what is done. The administrative difficulties have been in the way. Principles which are consistent and which would co-ordinate the whole country must have been taken into account. It should be remembered that the whole province of Bengal is not affected by famine. Only the district of Midnapore and the neighbouring districts are badly affected. And what is the reason for making so much noise about Bengal famine when only these two districts are affected ? Other parts of India have suffered as badly as these two districts. The same distress prevails in the province of Orissa which was visited by my friend Mr. Kunzru. As the Honourable the Mover has pointed out, Bengal, Orissa and parts of South India have been affected. The reason why much is made of Bengal is that two bulls are fighting and the calf has become unsafe. Two parties are fighting for power and the result is that the people starve and die. One party—I would not say which party—one party does propaganda by saying that the particular party should not be supported, that ryots should not sell paddy, the Marwari merchants should not release their hoards and all things should be done in such a way as to obstruct the party. Famine condition of the people is made a sport of the parties. This is the result of party politics. Knowing this condition of things that parties are fighting for power, Mr. Arthur Moore held out the olive branch leaf and said that leaders of Bengal ought to take into consideration the lives of the people and they must all unite together in the cause of mitigation and alleviation of the famine conditions. This has not been done in spite of his appeal and the result is worse. When the present League Ministry appointed Mr. Isphani for the purpose of purchasing and securing prices, what happened. At once the Marwari Chamber, the Hindu Chamber, sent in protests and they did not co-operate with him and ultimately Mr. Isphani had to yield and the whole *aus* crop was cornered by them and it still remains in their hands. Therefore any administrator's work in this area has become very difficult. Relief measures have been started and under the screen of relief measures propaganda is carried on by very eminent persons, by the leaders of the party and they have been advising and calling upon cultivators not to sell to Government agents,——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Don't read from a newspaper, but you can use the substance in your speech.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: They say Government is buying this paddy in order to send it to the Middle East and to deprive food to the people of this country. Then what happens. The Forward Bloc people are employed in

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Sir A. P. Patro.]

large numbers to run the kitchens and they come into close contact with the people—they instigate and say that the Government is taking away food from Bengal and sending it to other countries—this is the fifth column—that Bose is coming with Burma rice to save them. This is the kind of propaganda that is being carried on by one party. In such circumstances people are scared away and people do not release the stock that they have got. In these circumstances the Provincial Government has found itself inefficient and incapable of managing their affairs and hence military has come to their aid. Immense help has been rendered by the military within the last fortnight, as the interview of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief shows. As soon as food reaches Bengal they take it and distribute. Difficulty lies in the distribution. The military take the wagon and give it in charge of the Thana people and the Thana agency give it to the villagers; depots are opened close to the villages from where the villagers can buy food very easily and it is given free in deserving cases. The military have also sacrificed very much. It is said that the food was taken away to feed the military. On the other hand, the military have sacrificed their rations. Rice is not given to Europeans and Indians and *atta* is substituted, and in addition 50,000 of these people are supported by the army. So it is untrue to say that the military are the people who are responsible for this famine. It is necessary for us to remember what the military have been doing to help the civil administration in Bengal. The thing can be done in Bengal by proper adjustment of distribution. Labourers and peasants have been lured to Calcutta under false pretence in order to create confusion in Calcutta; now they are under proper guidance and they are being repatriated to their villages. Now there will be the *aman* crop, a crop of ten million tons and they will be going in and will have the inducement to get food. Therefore they should not gamble with the lives and safety of the people, and the public must also remember that it is their duty, as well as the duty of any Government to help the people. They forget that and instead of it they think that it is only the Government that should do the thing and not the people themselves nor their leaders.

Now the proximity of Bengal to the war zone really makes it very difficult for the people to get on, but what should be done we have got in the recommendations of the Gregory Report. These recommendations are such that they will certainly rehabilitate any Province that has been affected because they establish co-ordination first without affecting the constitutional principle and that is a very great thing to help the people. The rise in the food prices does not measure the absolute decline in the volume available of supplies since it is a long established fact that food prices rise disproportionately to decline. Imports of foodgrains act as a sort of safety valve. Now this importation can only be made in a limited quantity. Is it possible for people to have the full quantity required for their purposes and after all the absence of the imports reacts adversely on the food situation as a whole? Bengal suffered from this. Government made no attempt to import foodstuffs in proper time. When they had the warning of cyclone of 1942 they should have taken steps to reserve foodgrains. In actual practice what happened was that they were very callous. I do not say what Ministry, but the Bengal Government was very callous to the situation and therefore it did not ask for help of the Government of India and when it applied to the Government of India it was too late. Government made every effort possible to help them in the matter of importing of foodstuffs.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: When was this application for help made?

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: You had better refer to the newspapers yourself.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Was it before March or after March?

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: You want to know whether it was the League Ministry or whether it was the other Ministry?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: It is a material fact.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO: I do not want to pursue the matter whether it was the League or the other Ministry. So far as the League Ministry is concerned what became of the 470,000 tons of foodstuffs imported under it? It has

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

disappeared ; it did not go to any shop or anywhere else for distribution to the public. Whether it be the League Ministry or any other Ministry they are all in the hands of politicians. One Ministry is led by Marwari Chamber and other Indian Chambers of Commerce. Another Ministry is led by other persons. So while these two are fighting people are dying.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : And your grievances are not redressed.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Will you please proceed and take no notice of these interruptions ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO : From November, 3,000 tons were distributed daily from Calcutta to the districts. The Army is feeling its own responsibility in helping the civil authorities, but the civil authorities have no scheme to create a store for each group of villages and towns which would supply grains at reasonable rates. Confidence is to be restored. The Honourable the Mover has referred to the restoration of confidence. That is very essential. Now on the one side we have propaganda against Government and also propaganda not to sell anything to the Government and on the other side the confidence is to be restored. We have got the military helping and taking food to the very doors of the people. This must necessarily restore confidence because they physically demonstrate that the food is there. Food is made available and therefore it is not a question of it not being available ; it is given to them. Therefore the Government must take care of the stockists, the hoarders and the middlemen.

Then the Grow More Food campaign will increase production of food. Now what is done in China. In China in such famine conditions 1/16th of the produce is taken as tax in kind by the Government and is stored in each Province, in each district, where famine prevails. As a result people have confidence in their administration and the famine is also tidied over. Similarly, some such measure should be adopted here also. For instance, the *aman* crop which is coming in will yield about 10 million tons, and a portion of it should be kept as a grain reserve. Such a reserve would be of immense value to the people, because it will create confidence in the producer that the grain is kept in his own country, in his own district. Also it will help Government to distribute the grain wherever necessary and wherever desirable. Therefore, grain reserve is a thing which should be undertaken.

As regards control of prices, it is a very difficult question. Control of prices without ensuring supplies is meaningless. How can you control a thing without having supplies of it in hand ? The controlled price is quite different from the market price. For instance, my Honourable friend referred to the case of potatoes. Government have fixed a certain price for this commodity, and they sell according to that price. But the middleman comes in and asks for a lower price. He in turn sells it to others at a fabulous price—five or six times the controlled rate. Therefore, the ryot who has spent Rs. 5 per acre on growing potatoes does not get that much. In such cases it is very difficult for the ryot to be able to grow more food.

The harvesting of the *aman* crop is approaching, and this is just the time when necessary steps should be taken by the Government to conserve a sufficient quantity so as to be free from all the troubles. As soon as it is brought to the market, before it is taken hold of by the middleman, by the Marwari, it should be taken over by the Government.

It is gratifying to see that the great exodus from Calcutta is being helped by Government, and that able-bodied destitutes in that City have left it, and that it is returning to normal state. Several thousand destitutes have been collected with the aid of the military and volunteers and have been sent back to their homes.

Sir, ten million tons of crop is a great temptation for Government to work on, instead of merely depending on imports. The steps taken by the Government will enable the destitutes to reach their villages and take advantage of the supplies made available by Government. So the situation in Calcutta is gradually easing and the people are satisfied with the military administration which is assisting the civil authorities. It is the duty of the Government of Bengal now, as the harvest is coming in, to get hold of it and control it and manage it for the benefit of the people. They

[Sir A. P. Patro.]

should not allow it to be done by agents who are unscrupulous, as has been shown by Isphani incident. Such an agency, as has been shown, is altogether futile and harmful. Government should have more reliable persons and should be able to get the best out of them, and then the situation will be eased.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SOBHA SINGH (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, in the regrettable episode of the Bengal famine, now happily being cleared up under the energetic direction of H. E. the Viceroy, there are some amazing perplexities for which it is hard to find an intelligible answer. The food policy of the country has been the subject of so many conferences that one has almost lost track of them. Six Price Control and four Food Conferences have met periodically and the net practical result of their labours would appear to be nil, thus justifying a diarist's definition of a Conference as a group of men who individually can do nothing but as a group can meet and decide that nothing can be done. We have had committees and experts without number who have drawn mathematically precise lines from unwarranted assumptions to foregone conclusions and who have given admirable expose of the complexities of the problem and the reasons for past failure. In its brief career the Food Department has been toying with experiments, the solution being the result that we witness today. The Government of India Act 1935 and the scheme of provincial autonomy, offer admirable excuses, advantage of which has been fully taken, for the Government of India pleading powerlessness in the matter as it is primarily the concern of provincial governments. The most outstanding feature, however, is that the Bengal Government, although on the spot, failed to see the shadows of the approaching famine and maintained until a recent date that the rice position in Bengal was satisfactory. It only shows how absorbing the game of politics can be to the participants in it, that having eyes they see nothing else. It is an unpleasant business to disinter an episode which is best buried.

That a province so fertile and with its fields so enriched and irrigated by the Gangetic Delta and traditionally the home of the rice crop should have failed to produce enough rice to feed her people is apparently incomprehensible. The explanation perhaps is to be found in the diversion of large tracts from a food to a cash crop, *the jute*. I would suggest that to prevent a recurrence of the present unhappy famine conditions, the greater part of the land under jute cultivation should switch over to the rice crop. Other Provinces, notably the United Provinces and the Punjab, can help Bengal to tide over her calamity. There are vast cultivable areas in both these Provinces suitable for rice and other food crops and in bringing these tracts under the plough they would create more employment and would provide more income for their own under-employed and poor peasants and at the same time increase the food resources of the country.

As one of those who welcomes the energetic measures set in motion by His Excellency the Viceroy in employing military agency to relieve the distress in Bengal and as one who acknowledges the good work that that agency is rendering. I have some suggestions to make.

Firstly, in view of the awe with which illiterate villagers regard the uniformed forces and of the apprehension which may be created in the minds of the destitutes by the employment of the military, it is essential that to reassure them Government's policy in this matter should be formulated and broadcast. The decision to resettle migratory destitutes, now crowding Calcutta and other centres, in their native villages and induce them to pursue their former avocations is a wise one. Opening camps for these destitutes is at best only a temporary solution.

Secondly, with the approach of winter, Government should satisfy themselves that before the destitutes are resettled, they are provided with adequate clothing and that they will continue to receive food rations. Thirdly in tending the destitute starving medical facilities should be made available to ensure that feeding them does not *react* unfavourably and sanitary services should be provided to avoid epidemics breaking out. I have no doubt that Government will see the wisdom of announcing their policy in these matters to reassure the public and the destitute population which is affected.

The extent to which transport shortage has hindered relief measures has been generally recognised although not remedied yet. We are deeply appreciative of the

strenous efforts made by Sir Edward Benthall's Department to mobilise railway resources, in their present preoccupations with military traffic, in moving food to Bengal but the vital fact to be recognised is that railways by themselves are not adequate to serve the entire transport needs of the country. We hear the slogan " Grow more Food " which I heartily echo but there is a counterpart to it which I think it is essential to bear in mind and I would say " Grow more Food ", and to move it, make more roads. Road transport has been severely attentated with war-time conditions. It has been found in Bengal that food cannot easily be transported to the interior owing to lack of communications and transport. In the post-war era, road communications must play their important role of providing channels for moving traffic, of providing traffic for the railways and of opening up land-locked rural areas and I would therefore suggest that schemes of road development be undertaken now. The lesson which the Bengal famine has taught us of the need for close liaison between the Food Department and the Transport Department is one which has greater force in normal peacetime.

The Bengal famine and the events and policies connected there with expose, to my mind, the constitutional defects inherent in the Government of India Act, 1935. Provincial autonomy was hailed at the time as a constitutional advance by interested politicians who forgot that the unity of the country was being batered and sacrificed for political opportunities for the few. By becoming autonomous units provincial governments have become self-sufficient and insular in their outlook, regardless of the good of the country. The Central Government pathetically looks on, appeals, cajoles and at times holds impotent threats of withdrawing subventions and subsidies, but the provinces stand on their bond and charter. Before the decentralisation of the administration, partially in 1919 and completely in 1937, such a thing as famine could hardly have happened. I recognise that this is rather a cry in the wilderness but I hope that with greater appreciation of the disunity and separatism which the so-called constitutional advance has led to, there will be a clamour for a unitary government, strong in the centre, administering for the good and in the best interests of the country as a whole.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I think I will adjourn the House at this stage till 2-30 P.M. when I will call upon the Honourable Pandit Kunzru to speak.

The Council then adjourned for Lunch till Half Past Two of the Clock.

The Council re-assembled after Lunch at Half past Two of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the chair.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Mr. President, it was a very interesting speech which Mr. Sen, who represents the Food Department in this House, delivered this morning. I doubt, Sir, whether a speech as frank and as clear as his had ever been delivered in this House before (*Applause*). He did something to clear up the doubts that had arisen in our minds owing to the conflicting statements made by the Government of India and several Provincial Governments. These statements puzzled us and we never knew which statement we should accept. We did our best by means of questions to obtain information which would enable us to know the position accurately. Nevertheless there remained much on which we would have liked Government to throw some light. Mr. Sen has partly discharged that duty this morning. Yet I feel that Government should have enabled us to have fuller information at our disposal before this debate began. They realised the need for a connected account of the whole position for the information of the members of the Central Legislature. They had it prepared and circulated to members of the Legislative Assembly. But for some reason which I cannot understand it has not been distributed among members of this House. To the best of my information it was distributed in the Assembly the day the food debate began——

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : That is quite correct. I owe an apology to this House that this mistake was committed.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I think it is not right for Government to treat this House which is the Supreme Council in India differently from the Legislative Assembly. (*Applause*).

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : I came accidentally to know last evening that a statement on the food position in the whole country had been supplied to the members of the Legislative Assembly by the Government of India and was able to obtain it through the courtesy of a member of the Assembly. But it is unfair to this House, as you, Sir, have already said, that the Government should have ignored it in such an important matter.

Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. Sen in his speech dwelt largely on the situation in Bengal. I make no complaint about it, because no one who speaks on the food situation in this country can help bringing the sufferings of Bengal prominently to the notice of the public and the Government. Never in living memory has any part of the country been faced with a disaster of the magnitude which has befallen Bengal. Had I not visited some of the more seriously affected districts, I would have regarded the harrowing accounts of the distress in Bengal as incredible. But I have seen, Sir, with my own eyes things which neither my tongue nor my pen can adequately describe. I have seen crowds of starving men and women piteously begging for food ; I have seen children exhausted for want of nourishment laying themselves down on the ground and expiring in a few minutes; I have seen hospitals full of distitutes and in the most insanitary condition ; I have seen hundreds and thousands of patients whom death seemed to have marked out as its own. Generally, Sir, readers of newspapers come across statements of the deaths that have occurred in hospitals and the number of patients discharged from them. Only those who have seen these hospitals or seen the plight of Bengal, with their own eyes can understand what the fate of the discharged patients will be. Death stalks the land. My Honourable friend the Home Secretary said in the course of a debate in August last that Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee had been guilty of 'overdramatizing the situation.' I doubt whether anybody would have the temerity to make a similar statement today. The situation in Bengal is so serious that I do not think it can be exaggerated. Nobody need have any temptation to go beyond the facts because the facts are so telling that no exaggeration could serve his purpose better than a bare statement of what is actually happening.

Sir, I thought of dealing with the situation in Bengal before referring to other parts of India, but the problem of Bengal is so vast and requires so prompt and comprehensive a treatment that if I were to take up the question of the restoration of normal conditions in Bengal I would have hardly any time to refer to the other parts of the country which are also suffering from serious distress. I shall, therefore, Sir, refer briefly to the other parts of India before I deal with the situation in Bengal.

The Honourable Mr. Sen told us this morning that Government were fully aware that not merely Bengal but the Ceded Districts, the Malabar District—perhaps he did not mention the Malabar District— Cochin Travancore and Orissa were also suffering acutely and that Government were taking steps to send foodgrains to some of these areas. Sir, the accounts that have appeared of the famine in Bengal have been of such a character as to overshadow the distress in other parts of India. It is necessary Sir, therefore, for me to draw the attention of the House to their sufferings, particulary those of Travancore and Cochin. That they have been hard hit by the shortage of foodgrains is admitted on all hands, but it is not realised that notwithstanding the utmost efforts of the administrations of these States to utilise the food grown locally and the foodgrains sent by the Government of India to the best of their capacity they have been unable to provide for a *per capita* ration which would be enough to sustain the people in good health. It was Sir Frederick James, I believe , Sir, who drew the attention of the Assembly to the fact that in spite of the rationing resorted to by both the States the daily ration per head amounted only to 7½ ounces. I gather, however, from the papers circulated by the Government of India to the Members of the Assembly that during the last three months Cochin had been compelled to reduce the full rice ration of 1½ lbs. per head for three days in a week and give other grains on the other days of the week, but even this statement does not bring out, the deficiency of the ration that is distributed in Cochin and Travancore. It is therefore obvious, Sir, that these areas deserve much more attention at the hands of the Government of India than they have so far received.

I have very little to say about Malabar and the Ceded Districts. The situation in Malabar has come to be known recently. The number of people who have

died there on account of cholera alone has exceeded 30,000 and it is believed that this cholera epidemic has been largely due to malnutrition. As regards the Ceded Districts, I understand that the acuteness of the distress there is over and I hope that the measures taken by Government as well as the next rice crop will enable the people soon to see better days.

The case of Orissa, however, Sir, requires much more attention than it has received either at the hands of Government or of the public. We have been told several times in this House that Orissa is a surplus province. We therefore treated the complaints of the people of Orissa as exaggerations indulged in by local patriots in order to keep as large a quantity of grains as possible in their province for the use of the Oriyas, but my eyes were opened, Sir, when I visited Orissa recently. I found that in that part of the Balasore District, which was hit by the cyclone last year and by the floods this year, and in the affected parts of the Ganjam District, the distress was as serious as in some of the Bengal districts seen by me. I was told that deaths had occurred in both these districts which had not been allowed to be reported in the newspapers by the Government. The control over the publication of the news has been exercised so strictly that the people of the country were unable for a long time to become aware of the true state of things in Orissa. It is now known, however, that deaths are occurring there but even if no deaths were occurring there it would be the duty both of the public and of the Government to help the famine stricken parts of the Orissa districts in order to save the lives of lakhs of people. Surely it is not when the people of a province begin to die that that province should expect to receive our sympathy. If we want that our help should really be of some use we ought to give it when there is a fair chance of saving the lives of those to whom it is given.

Orissa, Sir, as I have already said, has been regarded as a surplus province. It is true that if you look at the trade figures, that is, the figures relating to exports from Orissa by rail and river, you will find, taking the figures from 1937-38 onwards which were supplied to the House in reply to a question of mine by Mr. Sen the other day, that the average exports came to about 170,000 tons. This will, roughly speaking, mean about 50 lakhs of maunds. But this quantity included the exports from some of the Orissa States. Let us suppose that these States account for not more than 30 per cent. of the total exports. This shows that the exports from the province of Orissa amounted to about 35 lakhs of maunds. I asked Government what had been the total export of rice from Orissa since December, 1942 up to the present time. I asked this question not because the financial year begins in December, but because the crops in several parts of Orissa were severely damaged by the cyclone last year, and I was anxious to know the total quantity of rice exported from Orissa after the calamity that befell it last year. I was informed by Mr. Sen that the total exports amounted to 126,000 tons, or about 34 lakhs of maunds and this quantity was exported from the province of Orissa only. This shows, Sir, that, notwithstanding the damage done to crops last year and this year, the same amount of rice has been exported from Orissa as used to be exported normally.

If the quantity of rice available for the relief of the famine-stricken areas had been sufficient, one would have admired the patriotism of the Government of Orissa in sending out a large quantity of rice for the relief of other parts of India. But the fact is that for a long time the free kitchens and the dole centres did not function efficiently. Even when I was in Orissa towards the end of October and when the officials said that they had sufficient rice to keep every free kitchen going and to supply the full ration in accordance with the scale sanctioned by Government, I received complaints from several centres in the Balasore district of inadequate supplies of rice and its irregular distribution.

Sir, I know that this subject has been made controversial by the Orissa officials. I shall therefore quote a few lines from a statement issued on behalf of the Orissa Merchants' Relief Committee in September last. I quote a few lines from this statement because the Maharaja of Paralakimidi, who is the Prime Minister of Orissa, is the President of this Committee. Appealing on behalf of this Committee, he said :—

"The general food situation of the province has already become alarming."

He further said, referring to the situation in the Ganjam district :—

"It has been reported that there have been about 330 deaths in Ganjam since the middle of May due to food shortage."

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

Then, comparing Bengal and Orissa, he said :—

"We are getting daily reports from Bengal in papers of the deaths of people due to malnutrition and starvation. In Calcutta they are being admitted to several hospitals as a safeguard. But there is no publicity here in Orissa, and people are dying unnoticed and the condition of the people is practically a sealed book."

Sir, this statement made by the Maharaja of Paralakimidi shows that, whatever the Ministers may choose to say now, the situation in the province was serious and that it requires the utmost attention both of the local Government and of the Government of India. If the facts relating to Orissa have never come to be known by the public outside, it is the fault of the Maharaja of Paralakimidi's own Government. The remedy lies in his own hands. If he were to make the public more fully aware of what is happening in Orissa, I have no doubt whatsoever that Orissa would receive much more help from outside than it has done so far.

Sir, I have dwelt on these facts so long in order to convince the Government of India that Orissa, which suffered last year on account of the cyclone and has suffered this year from floods in certain districts, requires special treatment at their hands. Orissa has always been a province with a ramshackle economy, and the export of foodgrains from Orissa merely meant that thousands and hundreds of thousands of people there did not know what it was to have a full meal from one end of the year to the other. I suggest, therefore, that the Government of India should look into the figures of export again, take the needs of Orissa sympathetically into consideration, adopt measures for the restoration of normal conditions there, and make the people feel that they would not be allowed to suffer because for no fault of their own they cannot make their voice heard outside their own province. I lay emphasis on this because the damage done to the crops since October last cannot be less than 30 lakhs of maunds of rice. This means, Sir, that the calamity that befell Orissa wiped out the exportable surplus. Yet exports, which are completely under Government control, are continuing up to the present day.

Now, I shall pass on to Bengal, which deserves our attention in a special degree. I have already said in a general way what my experience was when I went to some districts in Bengal. In spite, however, of the great distress prevailing there, we were told by the Governor, in a broadcast in October last, that in Midnapore—which is one of the worst sufferers from the famine—the free kitchens were being taken advantage of mostly by professional beggars. This shows, Sir, the extent of the misunderstanding that still persists in the minds of the Bengal officials—(*An Honourable Member* : "Permanent officials")—with regard to the magnitude of the calamity which Bengal is facing. The whole blame for the present situation is sought to be thrown on Mr. Fazlul Huq. I hold no brief for Mr. Fazlul Huq and if he made any statement contrary to the facts, he must bear the responsibility for it. But the sooner we realise the better that both the Fazlul Huq and Nazimuddin Ministries failed for a long time to realise that Bengal was faced with an unprecedented situation. My Honourable friend Mr. Sen said this morning that it came to be known by the beginning of May that the position was very serious and that unless adequate measures were taken to cope with it, there would be an inevitable collapse of civil life in the province. Yet, Sir, on the 8th May, Mr. Shuhrawardy said there was sufficient food for the people of Bengal and on the 30th May he again said that he did not wish to say that there was not enough rice in Bengal or that enough rice would not be coming from outside. Further, in July, referring to the food drive, he said :—

"We had to deal with two major factors, one panic brought about by insistence on shortages and the other, greed brought about by a speculative rise in prices."

It is clear, Sir, that up to July the Ministers, according to their public statements, were under the impression that there was no serious famine in Bengal and that its severity existed only in the imagination of its political opponents....

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : May I just say, Sir, that the Prime Minister of Bengal has publicly stated in Delhi that these statements were made by the Ministry under a specific order from the Food Department ?

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : I have no knowledge about it. But it is obvious, then, that the Fazlul Huq Ministry must have had to yield as much to the orders of the Governor as the Nazimuddin Ministry had to. But up till recently the whole blame was sought to be thrown on the previous Ministry

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

and so long as this game continues, the case of Bengal will never receive the attention that it deserves either at the hands of the Government of India or of the Local Government itself. It is obvious, Sir, that neither Mr. Fazlul Huq nor Mr. Suhrawardy could have made these statements on his own responsibility——

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHOWDHURY : Sir Azizul Huq made the statement in May last in Kishengarh that there is no food shortage.

*THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : I am not aware of that statement. However, these Ministries could not have made the statements which they did on their own responsibility. They must have done so on the assurance of the permanent officials that statistically there was no famine in Bengal. Statistics sufficiency did not enable the people of Bengal to get the food they required but for months and months those statistics were treated as if they were substitutes for food. Apart from this, steps were taken in Bengal just as they were taken in Orissa to prevent the news relating to the severity of the famine from reaching England and America. The " Civil and Military Gazette " of Lahore wrote as follows in this connection in the second week of September :—

" The fact is that foreign newspaper correspondents in India are not permitted to cable abroad even the bare facts of deaths and hospital admissions due to starvation issued in Calcutta by the Director of Information to the Bengal Government. Some account of the prevailing distress is permitted to be cabled provided the bare, horrible facts are toned down by descriptions of Government measures to alleviate the distress,--measures which are so often mere good intentions. Correspondents must not tell the British and American public the blunt facts of the situation." Both the public men of Bengal and the newspaper correspondents who did their best to inform the outside public of the disastrous situation prevailing in Bengal were regarded as alarmists. They were even accused of making the administration of famine relief more difficult. Yet, I think that no one has rendered greater service to Bengal than those people who left no stone unturned in spite of the obstructionist attitude adopted by the authorities to enable India and the world outside to know the seriousness of the situation they had to deal with. The authorities who prevented foreign newspaper correspondents from sending correct news about the situation in Bengal have done the Province a very serious injustice. I say this because practically within a week of the truth coming to be known by the British public, there was sort of commmotion throughout the United Kingdom and so strong was the pressure put on the Secretary of State for India both by Members of Parliament and the British public that he had to abandon his previous attitude of complacency and to admit that positive steps must be taken promptly in order to relieve the sufferings of the starving people of Bengal. Had the truth been allowed to be known earlier I have no doubt whatsoever that the situation would not have deteriorated to the extent to which it has. I do not know who was the authority responsible for the control of the news relating to the famine in Bengal. But whether it was the Government of India or the Local Government, it did a very serious injustice to Bengal by preventing the true facts from becoming known.

Sir, I have so far dealt with the causes which have been responsible for the present situation in Bengal, a situation which has become so difficult that neither the Government of India nor the Local Government know now how to deal with it properly. I should, however, refer to one other matter in this connection before I deal with other matters which are of more importance at the present time than the causes which have brought about the existing distress. The question to which I wish to refer is that of the deaths occurring from starvation in Bengal. Mr. Amery informed the House of Commons about the middle of October that according to his information only about a thousand people were dying weekly in Bengal on account of starvation. I do not know who was responsible for misinforming the Secretary of State. But the statement was so completely wrong that one wonders how any responsible official could make it. I can only understand it on the supposition that Mr. Amery who had throughout minimised the extent of the distress in India wanted to prevent a full knowledge of the severity of the disaster from reaching the people in England. On no other assumption can I understand the statement made by him in the House of Commons. As a matter of fact, however, the mortality is tremendously higher than has been admitted yet by any official. It is clear from the figures published the

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

other day that half of Bengal is seriously affected. There are about 90,000 villages in Bengal. Supposing that one death occurs weekly from starvation in each of the 45,000 seriously affected villages, it is clear that on a conservative estimate the number of weekly deaths could not be less than 50,000. In view, however, of the mounting death roll not merely in Calcutta but in many districts in Bengal, I fear that the weekly death rate is much higher. I will give only one instance of the appalling rate at which mortality is increasing. In Chandpur which is a part of the Tipperah district it was reported the other day that there had been 267 deaths in a week. Chandpur is a small town of 20,000 to 25,000. Obviously the people who died could not all have belonged to that small town. Many of them must have come from outside. But the total number of deaths that have occurred there owing to starvation among people who drifted there from the rural areas in search of food shows how the severity of the famine has increased even during the last few weeks. It seems to me after looking at such facts as are published in abundance in the newspapers that the weekly death roll would be nearer 1 lakh than 50,000 at the present moment. Winter is fast approaching. The people who have already been weakened by want of food will be unable to stand the exposure to cold and will die in very large numbers unless something can be done to provide them with warm clothing. It seems to me very difficult, however, for the Government of India to take adequate measures at this stage to supply the people of Bengal with the warm clothing that they need at the present time. I shall not therefore be surprised, Sir, if the death-rate goes up further. The *aman* crop certainly promises to be excellent. We all hope that it will greatly mitigate the distress which Bengal is suffering from. But according to official estimates the *aman* crop will not be fully available to the public before the 15th January. We have thus two months before us in which the people will continue to suffer in a greater degree than they have done in the past.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: What about the *aus* crop ?

*THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: My Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam asks me about the *aus* crop. The *aus* crop is believed to have yielded 1 million 800,000 tons of rice, but the *aus* crop has never been regarded in Bengal as a commercial crop. If therefore only a very small part of it was sold, we need not be surprised. But whatever the situation in respect of the *aus* crop may have been, there can be no denying the fact that the people who are suffering at present from the pangs of hunger and are dying in large numbers because of their inability to get their accustomed nourishment are not guilty of hoarding.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Twenty per cent. of the production.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Had they had any grain with them they would not have parted with their lands and their houses and their household utensils. I made enquiries at many of the free food kitchens visited by me in Bengal and I was invariably told that about three-fourths of the people fed in these kitchens were either petty cultivators or landless labourers who having parted with everything that they had in this world, even with their household utensils, resorted to these free kitchens in order to save their lives. Their self-respect would not allow them to depend on public charity so long as they could buy food with their own unaided resources, but when their means were exhausted they had no option left but to throw themselves on public charity. These people, Sir, deserve to be treated with respect and sympathy and not to be called professional beggars.

Sir, I shall now turn to the measures which in my opinion ought to be taken to alleviate the severe distress from which the people of Bengal are suffering. The Government of India and the British Government should have realised their responsibility in this matter long ago but in the name of provincial autonomy they have allowed hundreds of thousands of the people of Bengal to starve and die. Can anybody here conceive for a moment that if the province of Punjab been in the grip of a famine as severe as that which has afflicted Bengal, the Government of India would have kept quiet because the Punjab was being ruled by an autonomous Government ? They would have taken an immediate and direct interest in the preparation of measures for the relief of distress in the Punjab. The

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

Punjab is regarded, to use popular phraseology, as a martial province. The Government of India could not, therefore, have been as indffierent to its fate as they were for a long time to the fate of the people of Bengal. The second misfortune, Sir, of Bengal is that the Bengalis are too quiet. Had they been as self-assertive as the people of the Punjab are, had they instead of dying submissively asserted their will to live and made the Government feel that they would take all possible measures to save their lives themselves if the Government did not come to their aid, I am sure that their troubles would have received the attention of the Government much earlier than they have done, but the docility of the people of Bengal and its non-martial character have been its ruin in the present crisis. It is all the more necessary, therefore, that the Government should, in order to compensate for their past mistakes, take special measures to rehabilitate those petty peasants and landless labourers who have been reduced to beggary in Bengal.

Sir, we have been told that the *aman* crop would be a bumber crop, but I should like to know, Sir, in what way Government propose to deal with the *aman* crop. I gathered from the speech made by the Food Member yesterday that the Government realise the importance of restoring public confidence and that no steps would be taken which would create uneasiness among the people. I should, however, like to have, Sir, a fuller statement of the Government's policy than we have been given so far. I should, in the first place, like to know what are the steps that the Government have taken in connection with rationing. We understood that Calcutta would be rationed from the 15th November, but it has not been rationed so far. When is it really going to be rationed? I understand that rationing has been introduced in some of the smaller towns. My suggestion is, Sir, that towns with a population of 25,000 and over should be taken in hand at once. The Gregory Report recommended that to begin with towns with a population of 100,000 and over should be rationed. I think, Sir, that the position is so serious that in Bengal at least the smaller towns too must be rationed. Apart from this, Sir, I feel that if any attempt is made to purchase a large part of the *aman* crop or to make the people suspect that the stocks purchased by Government would be moved out of their districts and taken to Calcutta, the Government will be faced with a greater disaster than it has had to cope with so far.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Sen, said that the Government of India have made it public that they will take all possible steps to superintend and supervise the execution of any policy which might be agreed to at the Food Conferences, but this statement is much too vague to give any satisfaction to the public. Besides the Government of India must assume a more direct responsibility than they have done up to the present time. I further suggest, Sir, that when it has been decided how much rice should be purchased by the Government of Bengal its purchases should not be left to the officials alone. Repeating a suggestion made by Mr. Holdsworth at the second Food Conference I suggested that a Purchasing Commission should be appointed and that it should contain a business element in it. I am not sure whether Mr. Holdsworth made the latter suggestion but I feel, and feel strongly, that the Government need the co-operation of businessmen at the present juncture. If a Purchasing Commission is set up consisting of the representatives of consumers and businessmen and the administration the result will be much better than if the purchase of rice were to be left to the sole discretion of the officials or the trade.

The second point, Sir, on which I should like to have information is the transport of food to the districts. The figures that have been given by the Bengal Ministry show that a very large part of the foodgrains received by it from outside was consumed in Calcutta. It is not surprising, therefore, that the districts have suffered severely. As a result, however, of the visit of the Viceroy to Bengal, the services of two military officers have been placed at the disposal of the Government of Bengal for organising the movement of food outside Calcutta and securing the maximum help of the Army in the distribution of relief. I understand from the reply given to a question of mine the other day by Mr. Sen that the total quantity of foodgrains sent to the districts daily amounts to about 2,500 tons. Now, Sir, according to the broadcast of the Governor of Bengal to which I have already referred, leaving out greater Calcutta Bengal requires about 600,000 tons of foodgrains every month, or about 20,000 tons daily. Now, let us suppose that 75 per cent. of the people will be able to support

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

themselves somehow or other. The Government must still provide for a daily movement of 5,000 tons of foodgrains to the districts. But at the present time only half of this quantity is being sent out. It is obvious, therefore, that much more energetic measures have to be taken to transport food to the districts than have been taken so far. I should like to know in this connection whether river transport has been properly organised. When I went to Bengal, I found nothing to indicate that any special steps were being taken to make use of the waterways of Bengal for the transport of foodgrains. I am therefore anxious to know what steps have been taken to co-ordinate the various methods of transport and, in particular, what measures have been adopted to make full use of the waterways of Bengal for the supply of food to the starving people.

Sir, I should like to refer here to the request made by the Governor of Bengal for being supplied with 250,000 tons more of food so that Bengal might be in a position to tide over the crisis during the next two or three months. Considering, Sir, the number of deaths that are occurring, the starvation that is witnessed in every famine-affected district, it is rather hard to believe that the Bengal distress is due merely to a shortage of 250,000 tons of foodgrains. I am therefore unable to understand on what basis this request has been made. If the total shortage amounts to 250,000 tons only, how is it that thousands of people are dying and millions of people are starving today in Bengal ? I hope that some light will be thrown on this point by Mr. Sen when he replies.

The last question to which I should like to draw the attention of Government is that of the rehabilitation of the people who have been uprooted from their homes. There are thousands and hundreds of thousands of destitutes who, having parted with all that they had, look up to the public and to the Government to support them in this dire calamity. We should all like them to go back to their villages. But as they have severed their ties with their old villages by selling away even the houses that they had, it is the duty of the Government to put them in a position to go back to their villages. The Government should not think that they have done their duty if they have forcibly sent the starving people back to their villages. Those people must be enabled to start life afresh. The petty cultivators who hvae had to part with their land should be helped to get it back. And the landless labourers must be provided with fund till they can earn their bread and enabled to rebuild their homes, and to have a few agricultural implements at least in order to resume the life which was theirs before they were engulfed by the disaster to which I have referred so often in the course of my remarks. This is an extremely important point. I have never seen any reference to this question in the official statements that have been made so far. The future welfare of the destitutes may have been referred to in passing in some official statement, or may have adorned the peroration of some Minister or official, but so far as I know no serious statement has been made which would show that the Government had formed any plan to deal with these hundreds and thousands, probably millions of people, who are today exiles from their villages and who, though longing to return to them, are unable to do so because of their poverty.

Sir, I have so far dealt with the measures that ought to be taken immediately by the authorities in order to alleviate distress in Bengal. But the question to which the sufferings of Bengal have compelled us to devote our attention is a much bigger one than we imagine. I shall not deal in detail with the recommendations of the Gregory Committee on this point because my Honourable friend Mr. Sen dealt with some of them very lucidly this morning. I should, however, like to stress the fact that the basis of the Gregory Committee's recommendations is the willingness and ability of His Majesty's Government to supply us first with a million tons of foodgrains for current consumption and second with 500,000 tons more for the formation of a central reserve. Unless these recommendations are carried out the Committee's plan will break down. The ability of His Majesty's Government to supply India in the near future with a million and a half tons of food is the crux of the question. If the authorities are unable to carry out this recommendation, I wonder whether we shall not find in the near future that India has to deal with an even worse situation than it is faced with in Bengal.

Sir, the Gregory Committee, after dealing with the present food situation in India, made suggestions for increasing the supply of food to the country and one of the recommendations made by the Committee was that assistance should

be afforded to industrialists for the importation of plant and in all other ways such as the giving of technical advice for the manufacture of ammonium sulphate to the extent of at least 350,000 tons. The Committee realised that without an adequate supply of manure, the " Grow More Food " campaign will not become a reality. It is necessary, therefore, that we should know from Government what steps have been taken with regard to this important question.

Another point which the Committee referred to was the assurance given by the Government of India that action had been initiated in regard to the importation of tractors and other agricultural implements and their parts. This matter too is important because we have been repeatedly told that the " Grow More Food " campaign has not been able to make adequate progress partly because of the insufficiency of manure and partly because of the unavailability of the agricultural implements required. It is necessary, therefore, that Government should give us full information on this point. My Honourable friend Sir Jogendra Singh has been touring the whole of India and exhorting the people to bring more land under cultivation and even to use a part of the lands on which commercial crops are grown for the production of foodstuffs. But his appeals will prove unavailing unless the things practically needed in order to carry out his exhortation are available to the people.

Lastly, Sir, I should like to draw the attention of the House to the recommendation made by the Gregory Committee with regard to prices. It recommended that the prices of foodgrains should be brought down. This is undoubtedly a very important matter. Those of us who have never been to Bengal imagine that the distress of Bengal is due merely to the shortage of rice. The fact is, however, that there is shortage there of all kinds of foodgrains and what is even worse, the foodgrains that are available there are not within the reach of the poorer people. I found scarcely any foodgrain there the price of which was less than 12 annas a seer. The supply of foodgrains in these circumstances is by itself totally insufficient to meet the real needs of the people. Simultaneously with the an increase in the supply of foodgrains steps must be taken to bring down their prices. It will be possible to bring down the prices only when the prices of the requirements of the villagers are also brought down. It is impossible to deal with foodgrains as an isolated item. The Committee, therefore, suggested that Government should take steps not merely to bring about a reduction in the prices of foodgrains but also in the prices of the other necessaries of life, particularly of those things which the agriculturist needs.

This, Sir, brings us to the important question of inflation. I will not deal with it at length because we have had occasion in the past to refer to it repeatedly. We warned Government of the serious harm that their policy would do. The Finance Member, however, thought that those who drew attention to the serious dangers lurking in the inflationary policy of Government were only creating panic in the country. After dealing with the rise in prices in his last Budget speech he said :—

" I most earnestly deprecate loose talk and wild exaggeration in these matters for they are the parents of panic buying and hoarding and these in their turn benefit only the profiteer and the speculator."

Yet, Sir, in the recent debate on the Indian food situation which took place in the House of Commons, Sir John Anderson admitted on behalf of His Majesty's Government that the Government of India had not taken adequate steps to meet the dangers inherent in their inflationary policy. I have not repeated the words of Sir John Anderson. I have merely paraphrased his language, but the support that has been given to our contention by Sir John Anderson and also by Mr. Amery in his replies to several questions in the House of Commons shows that those who were accused of spreading panic have unfortunately turned out to be true prophets. Had they been listened to earlier, had the plea that war expenditure must be met somehow or other not been resorted to as freely by the authorities as it has been, I feel certain that the situation today would have been much better than it is. The Government of India, therefore, owe a heavy responsibility to the country in this matter. If there is to be any reduction in the price of foodgrains and the other requirements of the people, the Government of India alone are in a position to take the necessary steps to bring about such a result.

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

Sir, I believe I have dealt with all the main recommendations made by the Gregory Committee. I should, however, like to lay special emphasis on the recommendations made with regard to increasing the supplies of food available in the country.

The greatest difficulty that we have to encounter at the present time is that the country is exceedingly poor and that its standard of living is deplorably low. We are also faced with the fact that the production of rice and wheat per acre is much less than it is in other countries. It is necessary in view of the experience, the unfortunate experience, that we have gained that the question of food supply should be looked at as a whole. What has happened so far has made it clear that no province can be left to deal by itself with this all important question. The Government of India is concerned, and vitally concerned, with the adequate supply of food to the people. I suggest, therefore, that an agricultural committee or commission should be set up which would lay down a proper plan and co-ordinate the efforts of the Provincial Governments in carrying it out. I lay particular stress on this because it has so far been the duty neither of the Provincial Governments nor of the Government of India to see that the country had sufficient stores of food to meet its needs. We have up to the present time depended on a purely price economy and we have left the poor people to look after themselves as best they may. Yet we have to remember that the country is desperately poor and that the cultivators who produce the foodgrains are in a more deplorable condition than the urban population. I have referred at length to the situation in Bengal. I may therefore point out that in accordance with the Report of the Land Revenue Commission which was presided over by Sir Francis Floud four-fifths of the cultivated area in Bengal is sown with only one crop. I may also point out on the authority of the same commission that most of the agriculturists are not in a position to support themselves and their families. At page 86 of its Report, the Commission observes as follows :—

"One of the most disquieting features of the enquiries made for the Commission by the Director of Land Records and Surveys is that the percentage of families holding 2 acres or less is 41·9 per cent. and the percentage of holding between 2 and 4 acres is 20·6. If these figures can be taken as representing the economic position throughout the Province, it means that two-fifths of the agricultural families hold an area of 2 acres or less, which is insufficient for their maintenance, and that they are compelled to take land as *bargadars* (that is, on the sharing system), without any legal rights or to supplement their income by working as day labourers, by hiring carts or by other subsidiary occupations. One-fifth of the agricultural population has just sufficient land for their maintenance in moderate comfort, but without any margin for unforeseen expenditure."

It is clear from this that two-thirds of the cultivators in Bengal live in an unenviable condition. I dare say that the condition of the cultivators in other parts of India is much the same. The question of the production of food therefore assumes the greatest importance in the present circumstances. I hope, therefore, that Government will be able to make some statement on the subject in the course of this debate which will be of a reassuring character. We have thought too much of the independence of the provinces so far and too little of the welfare of the people. I do not want that the legitimate autonomy of the provinces should be interfered with in any way. But we must not allow any constitutional technicalities to obscure the fact that the lives and the welfare of the people depend in a large measure on the action taken by the Government of India to co-ordinate the policies of the Provincial Governments and to give them adequate funds to carry out those policies. Unless the economic unity of India is recognised and the Government of India are prepared to utilise all those powers with which the constitution invests them, we shall, in future, be faced with a greater disaster than any that we have faced in the past. We have been told that there may be a food shortage after the war throughout the world. It is necessary that we should take account of that warning and take all possible steps now to meet our own needs and be, if possible, in a position to relieve the distress of others. If, however, we let things drift, we may after the war find that the needs of the devastated areas receive greater attention than the needs of the people of this country. Sir, I appeal again both to the Government of India and to the British Government to attend to this most important question and in the immediate present to supply us with enough shipping to enable us to get a million and a half tons of foodgrains. The shipping at their disposal may not be adequate.

But I suggest, Sir, that the people of some other parts of the Empire, for instance of England and the Dominions, should show some willingness to reduce their rations in order that their fellow-citizens in other parts of the Empire may be in a position at least to save their lives.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I will just mention that I have allowed (the Honourable Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru) an hour and a half to address this House as I believe he was making an interesting speech full of recommendations and instructions. He has been the spokesman not only of his own Party but of many members of this House. I therefore ask Honourable Members of this House not to repeat in subsequent speeches the remarks which have fallen, and so ably, from the mouth of the Honourable Pandit Kunzru but to confine themselves to other remarks and to new matter.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: May I suggest that the amendments which have now been circulated might be moved without speeches.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: But there are other speakers.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: The amendments might be moved without speeches so that the House may have all the amendments before it. That is the usual practice.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: There are three amendments. When you speak you can refer to them.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM The amendments may be moved without speeches so that the House may be in possession of those amendments. I think that should be done.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You want it to be done at this stage?

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: I think that would be the proper procedure.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Each of you can move your amendment.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Sir, I beg leave to move :—

4 P.M.

"That to the motion the following be added, namely :—

'and that having done so this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council that he may be pleased to appoint an impartial Commission presided over by a high judicial dignitary to enquire into the causes which have brought about the food crisis in Bengal and other parts of India and for responsibility for the present situation in Bengal and report on the adequacy or otherwise of the steps taken to prevent and relieve distress'."

Sir, I move. I shall reserve my remarks for my speech tomorrow.

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER (Bombay Chamber of Commerce): Sir, I move :

"That to the motion the following be added, namely :—

'And that this House is of opinion that at a suitable date an enquiry should take place to examine the whole question of the food shortage in India and in particular in Bengal. The enquiry should be conducted by a suitable body of the type of a Royal Commission and its personnel should be completely outside the field of Indian politics. Its terms of reference should cover a full examination of the present food shortage and the making of recommendations to prevent the recurrence of the existing distress'."

Sir, I move.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Sir, I move :

"That to the motion the following be added, namely :—

'and having taken into consideration this Council views with grave concern the tragic situation prevailing in Bengal and recommends to the Governor General in Council to adopt immediately more vigorous and effective measures to cope with the famine in Bengal and to afford adequate relief to the other distressed parts of the country. This Council further recommends to the Governor General in Council to take steps for the appointment of a Royal Commission composed of independent and impartial persons, majority of whom shall be Indians commanding the confidence of the peoples of India to enquire into and report *inter alia* on the following points relating to the continued prevalence of famine conditions in Bengal and the unprecedented death-rate resulting therefrom :—

(*a*) the cause of the present distress ;

(*b*) the degree of effectiveness of the steps taken to prevent or remedy the situation from time to time ;

(*c*) the suitability of the administrative organization in charge of famine operations ;

(*d*) the adequacy or otherwise of the relief measures adopted by Government ;

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

(e) the accuracy or otherwise of mortality statistics and effect of the present famine on mortality rates;

(f) the steps to be taken to counteract or mitigate the effects of starvation and malnutrition upon the younger generation; and

(g) the measures to be taken to prevent a recurrence of the present trouble in any part of India'."

Sir, I move.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: These amendments have been introduced. Of course, it will be for me to decide later on which amendment is to be placed first before the House.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: Mr. President, you were good enough to remind me and the House that on an important occasion like this time is a very valuable factor and that you were pleased to allow the previous speaker a longer time only because you thought that his remarks were bound to be very useful and instructive to all concerned. I cannot, Sir, make a promise to you or to the House to make my speech as instructive as the previous one nor can I assure you that following, as I have to, such a comprehensive speaker as the Honourable Dr. Kunzru I can avoid dealing with one or two points that he has already dealt with, although what I can promise to you is this: that I shall not deal with those points at any time for more than a few seconds.

Sir, it is a very deplorable culmination of a long Viceroyalty of seven years and a half of Lord Linlithgow, who first came to India as the President of a Royal Commission on Agriculture, to have left the shores of India in the grip of a terrible famine. It is difficult to understand his stoicity, almost verging on inhumanity in so far as he did not *even once* go to Bengal to see things for himself, the very first thing which his successor did when he arrived in India....

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Honourable Member, I do not wish to stop you but I would only remind you that it is not Parliamentary practice either to refer to the King or to the Viceroy and surely Lord Linlithgow stood here in the position of the King. If you have to make any remarks you are welcome to say as much as you like about the Government of India.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: But he is an integral part of the Government of India.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: Sir, only a short time ago this August House passed a motion congratulating his successor on his appointment as Viceroy. That was a personal motion. If we can congratulate a Viceroy, we can certainly condemn him too.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I have only reminded you of the Parliamentary practice.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: Sir, I shall refer to his duties, his responsibilities, as a Governor General and not refer to his personal charms at all of which at least Lord Linlithgow had none.

Sir, I was going to say that between the time that Mr. N. R. Sarkar resigned and Sir Azizul Haque was appointed, there was no Food Member and therefore Food lay in the direct and immediate charge of the Viceroy. I do not know if in that case we have to criticise the policy of the Food Department whom we shall have to call to account. We shall have to take into account the Governor General himself.

Sir, the other day I heard Sir J. P. Srivastava open the debate in the other House and I felt that a proper summary of what he said there would be this:— I am a baby three months old—(he was appointed three months ago)—. Look at my achievement. I am now able to lift up my feeding bottle. Wait for a dozen years and another ten until I can go and fight the wolf at your door; but, I do solemnly promise to you that I shall *never* rest content until the wolf stands there and makes a prey of you all.

Sir, the spokesman of the Government who spoke this morning and to whom a very warm compliment was just paid by my Honourable friend, Dr. Kunzru, spoke as nicely and as cleverly as his chief. He said that the Government got

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

alive to the situation in May. He stated that the problem was merely a problem of distribution. May I ask him, therefore, what the all-imporatant Governor in Bengal was doing ? How has he used his special powers ? Is he to use them only when killing is required ? The problem was stated by the Government spokesman this morning as being merely an administrative problem for which the sole responsibility lies and must lie on the head of the Governor. How did the Governor discharge his responsibility ? During the Midnapore floods his callousness for Indian lives had become apparent. Why was he kept in office to perform another mass murder of Indian people ?

The Government spokesman also referred to the introduction of free trade in the eastern zone, and he mentioned the provinces of Bihar, Bengal, Assam and Orissa. I have something to say about this performance. I am speaking of what happened in Bihar. In Bihar, when the paddy crop was ready, not only the provincial, but even the district embargo was imposed. The result was that Government agents and the rice mill owners were able to buy at very cheap and favourable prices. When the grower was thus deprived of his stock, the embargo was lifted and the miller and the middleman were able to sell in a high market full of competitive buyers.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : The embargo was lifted for the benefit of the trade !

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA : Yes, those who trade on the miseries of the people. The result of Government action was that the imposition of the embargo and the lifting of it were so timed that growers were deprived of their stock and the consumer could not find the food to eat.

My Honourable friend Sir A. P. Patro referred to party fractions in Bengal. But let me remind him and this House that Bihar was and is a section 93 province under the direct charge of the Governor. Who will answer for him ?

Sir, I came across a couple of hours ago a statment by Mr. Leopald Amery, that worthy father of that worthy son John Amery who broadcasts frequently from Berlin, that as a result of the food crisis in Bengal no European lives had been lost. It is a matter of congratulation in many ways, but, I should have waited to see how many of my beloved Executive Councillors would have been in their seats today had that appalling catastrophy happened. I, in my mind, have hardly any doubt at all that there would immediately have been an open and public impeachment of Lord Linlithgow, which, because *merely* Indian lives have been lost, is considered a preposterous proposition.

Sir, my charge against the Government of India is that it not only did not do anything to prevent the Bengal famine but it even tried to suppress all news about it. Dr. Kunzru referred to this point. When news could not be suppressed altogether, the effort was to tone it down as much as possible. Whereas factual news was undermined, expression of views or criticism was wholly stopped—the editorial columns of "*The Amrita Bazar Patrika*" are still blank. The official records reveal that between the time that the transfer of the Government from the East India Company to the Crown took place and the year 1901, there were seven famines and one severe scarcity in this country. In situations of this kind the attitude of the Government of India in those days was wholly different from what we see today. Not only no attempt was made to minimise or suppress news about the gravity of a calamity, but, on the contrary, the fullest measures were taken to see that the widest publicity was given and relief organised on the broadest possible basis. I have carefully read the Report of the Indian Famine Commission of 1901, and I am amazed at the present callous unconcern of the Government of India as compared to their conception then of the primary and essential responsibility of a government to look after the food and health of the entire civilian population—not only of those who are engaged on war work or employed in European concerns. One finds in William Digby's book "The Famine Campaign in Southern India", which is published in two volumes, that when famine occurred in Southern India in 1876—78, every district officer in India was called upon to organise relief and every Governor in his own province, not only in Madras, took upon himself the mobilization of all resources in the whole country to cope with the situation that had arisen. Why has that not been done ? Did party factions stop the Viceroy

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Rai Bahadur Sri Narain Mahtha]

from waking up the Governors? Or did party factions stop the Governors from waking up district officers? This neglect is sheer callousness Some people have called it a planned industry on the part of the Government to bring about famine.

Sir, in the case of previous famines these activities about mobilizing relief were not kept confined to India alone. Appeals were made to all countries, and the response was world wide. Government at that time were not ashamed of telling the whole world that there was a famine in India. I shall read out to the House a small telegraphic message sent to the "*London Times*", which is contained in this book by Digby, about a meeting which was presided over by His Grace the Governor of Madras. The message was as follows:—

"Please publish, inform Lord Mayors London, York, Dublin, Mayors Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, Provosts of Edinburgh, Glasgow, public meeting, Governor presided resolved appeal British public for aid population Southern India. Severity famine increasing, distress great, rainfall continues insufficient, population affected 20,000,000, numbers absolutely dependent charity Madras Presidency 1,075,000, daily larger; increased mortality already reached nearly half million; distress now reaching better classes owing increased price grain double prevailing Bengal famine. Matters become worse rapidly. Under most favourable circumstances of weather, which is still unfavourable; pressure must continue till crops are gathered January. Necessity assistance most urgent pressing."

Sir, Governors in those days were not shy of presiding over public meetings called in aid of a distressed people. Nor was there any harm thought to accrue from giving the widest publicity to a national calamity. The situation is different today. Why? It is so for two reasons. The first is that the Bengal famine is entirely the creation of the Government itself, and had they thought Indian lives to be valuable, the famine was easily foreseen and could have been averted. The second reason for suppressing publicity gives me a sense of immense gratification and that reason is this. The Britisher is fast losing his sense of proprietorship and trusteeship over India.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: A welcome sign!

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: Indeed, and so I say it gives me a sense of immense gratification. It does not occur to the Britisher now that he ought to do what he did in the seventies of the last century. The other day, when my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam made a demand for a subsidy of seven crores of rupees for the Bengal Government, the Honourable Mr. Jones in his reply, reminded us that famine is no uncommon experience in India, and that the provinces had been given real autonomy—which also meant economic or fiscal autonomy. While I propose to deal at a later stage with the question of autonomy, I feel that I cannot proceed without saying something about the grinding poverty of the people of India which manifests itself in many ways, in the prevalence of malnutrition and disease, in the horrible living conditions of industrial workers and the steady increase of landless peasants.

In 1933, the Director of the Indian Medical Service, Major General Sir John Megaw, estimated that 39 per cent. of the Indian people were fairly nourished, 41 per cent. poorly nourished, and 20 per cent. very poorly nourished. At least 80 million people of India were perpetually hungry. He reported further that disease is widely disseminated throughout India and is increasing steadily and rapidly. In Bengal 78 per cent. of the population were under-nourished. "The peasantry of Bengal", he said on the basis of an official report of the director of Health, "are in large proportion taking to a dietary on which even rats could not live for more than a few weeks". Low physical vitality is another striking evidence of Indian poverty causing the average expectation of life for an Indian to be only 23 years as compared with double or more than double in other countries. The third outstanding feature of the Indian economic structure is the fact that more than 80 per cent. of the Indian people depend for their existence on what they can raise from the tiny scattered strips of land which make up the average peasant holding.

The failure to develop industries as alternative sources of employment has led to the terrific over-pressure on agriculture which is the basic cause of Indian poverty.

As long ago as 1880, the Indian Famine Commission, appointed by the British Government, reminded this Government of India that :

"at the root of much of the poverty of the people of India.....lies the unfortunate circumstance that agriculture forms almost the sole occupation of the mass of the population, and that no remedy for present evils can be complete which does not include the introduction of a diversity of occupations, through which the surplus population may be drawn from agricultural pursuits and led to find the means of subsistence in manufactures or some such employment."

Yet between 1891 and 1911 the percentage of the population dependent on agriculture increased from 61 per cent. to 72 per cent. as more and more artisans, craftsmen, spinners, weavers, etc., were forced to turn back to the land. In 1911, Sir Thomas Holderness estimated that there was "less than one acre and a quarter per head for that portion of the population which is directly supported by agriculture" and went on to point out that :

"not only does the land of India provide food for this great population, but a very considerable portion of it is set apart for growing produce which is exported. In fact it pays its bills for import and discharges its other international debts, mainly by the sale of agricultural produce. Subtracting the land thus utilized for supplying (the produce) to foreign markets from the total area under cultivation, we shall find that what is left over does not represent more than two-thirds of an acre per head of the total Indian population. India, therefore, feeds and to some extent clothes its population from what two-thirds of an acre can produce."

There is probably no country in the world where the land is required to do so much.

This is what Sir Thomas Holderness reported in his book, "Peoples and Problems of India".

Sir, I now come to another point. There is a prevalent and fallacious theory that India's poverty is the result of over-population. "Where is the Indain Malthus who will inveigh against the devastating torrent of Indian children ?" This is what the British economists question with one voice and all our official reports echo this very sentiment. The Whitley Commission on Labour in India, reporting in 1931 declared :

"Increased production of food ultimately effects little improvement in the standard of living.....since the population quickly multiplies under these favourable conditions. Formerly, war, famine and pestilence were all active in reducing the numbers for which the land has to provide sustenance ; war and famine have been largely negative as active influences, whilst deaths from pestilence have been considerably reduced. The result is a steadily growing pressure on the land."

Such arguments convey the picture of an enormously rapid increase of the Indian population as a result of healthy living, comfort, and security under British *Raj*. Yet, the actual rate of increase of population in India has been markedly less than that of any European country. Between 1880 and 1930, the population of England and Wales increased by 54 per cent., that of India by 32 per cent. Only in the decade from 1921 to 1931 was the rate of increase in India 10·6 per cent. as compared with 14·2 per cent. in the United States, and was higher than that of England. Indian poverty, however, does not date from 1921. It perhaps dates from the time of the British occupation of India, leading to a perpetual drain on and the exploitation of the resources of this country. I say so with confidence because in 1769 the Company's own Resident at Murshidabad reported that—

"it must give pain to an Englishman to have reason to think that since the accession of the Company to the Dewani (civil administration) the condition of the people of this country has been worse than it was before, and yet I am afraid the fact is undoubted. I well remember this country when trade was free and the flourishing state it was then in ; with concern I now see its present ruinous condition, which I am convinced is greatly owing to the monopoly that has been made of late years in the Company's name of almost all the manufactures in the country."

Here is a clear admission by an honest Briton who was in authority to say what he did and the fact stated by him is the reason for the repeated famines that we get in this fair land of India. This picture given by the Resident of the "Honourable" East India Company, as it was called, is a very real picture indeed.

Another implication of the Malthusian critics of India's birth-rate is that the growth of population has outstripped the growth in the volume of food produced. This too is not the case. Between 1910 and 1930 population increased by about 17 per cent., food production by about 30 per cent. It is admittedly true that the

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present production of food is wholly inadequate, but the reasons for this inadequacy lie in the system of production and the failure to develop the available resources, not in any absolute over-population. In fact there is every reason to believe that by making full use of her resources, India could support a far larger population than at present. About one-third of the cultivable area has not yet been brought under cultivation. That was the work that the Department of Agriculture should have taken up and not the " Grow More Food Campaign " which produces no effect on any one. I have never understood either the philosophy or the reality of this " Grow More Food Campaign". I have been working as the Leader of the National War Front in my district and I have, I fear, been soiling my hands by pasting many of your posters. I cannot understand the logic of this " Grow More Food Campaign". If there is a man who has an extra acre of land, if he has seeds available, if he has an extra pair of bullocks, is he waiting for your propaganda leaflet to reach him for cultivating his extra acre ? You ought to enquire whether he has seeds, whether he has the pair of bullocks, and you should make available to him the required implements for agriculture. You are not doing these things. You are simply parading to the world that you are doing an act of great service to this country.

I might in this connection remind you of one thing. I am not yet in possession of a full report about it, but I can yet tell you something. There is a body in Bihar known as the Bihar Planters' Association. It is a body of some standing and recognition—even statutory recognition. This body elects one representative to the Bihar Assembly. At a meeting of this body it was stated by some planters that the seeds supplied to the villagers by the Agricultural Department were, on their estimate, 75 to 80 per cent. rotten. The poor agriculturists are not educated or trained enough to test the seeds. The test is very simple. It has been an act of moral sin on the part of the Department to have sold those seeds to the agriculturists. To test the potency of the seeds all that you have to do is to soak a piece of blotting paper in water and spread 100 seeds over it. By the next morning you can see how many of the seeds germinate and how many do not. You know what percentage is good and what percentage is bad. Big planters know it and they are cautious enough to apply the test but the poor agriculturist does not know and confidently relies on what he is given. I propose first to enquire and then refer the matter to the provincial government, my advise to you is this do not waste so much money and energy over propaganda ; attend to the actual and real requirements of agriculture, arrange the seeds, provide the manure and have productive cattle.

Sir, I will not go any further into the picture that I was trying to paint before you of the results of British administration in India. Suffice it to say that this is the state of things in describing which I have taken some time of this House, a state of things which is the result of British administration during the last 150 years of which we are asked to be proud.

The cause of Indian poverty is neither the rate of population growth nor anything else that is used for imperialist propaganda, but, the fact that India is a case of arrested economic development and arrested industrial development. That is the real fact and that is which you will be constrained to admit if you want to go to the root of the matter honestly and that is the state to which we have been reduced in the interests of the foreign capitalist who is here out to trade and wants all that we have and wants to leave us nothing.

Sir, I am not sorry that I had to give vent with a free mind without restraint to the honest feelings of an Indian because I had to give you and the House the picture of Indian poverty and to show to the House how poverty has come to us on account of foreign rule and foreign exploitation. I had also to do so, because while the exploitation goes on, the benign Government of India and their masters in England carry on a propaganda all over the world that the Indian is an unsocial being incapable of understanding the difficulties of his neighbour and adjusting his own position so as not to make it wholly prejudicial to the vital needs of his neighbour.

Sir, I have figures here with me to show what the prevailing prices in India were during the time of Alauddin Khilji, when even an ordinary soldier in the Army was paid 234 Tankas per month, a Tanka being equivalent to a rupee, to maintain himself and his horse, and to provide himself with uniform. He was an *ordinary*

soldier, *not* an officer. I shall not go into the long price list but shall merely say that a maund, which at that time meant 14½ seers, of wheat could be had for 7½ Jitals, a Jital being equivalent to a pice and rice was cheaper. But now, Sir, we are starved, we are exploited, and we are asked to accept perpetual bondage in gratitude for what has been done to us. The Britisher has a special knack of committing a wrong and then congratulating himself on having done so.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will you please bring your remarks to a close now? There are other speakers also. I have allowed you 40 minutes as you asked for.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: I think as the Government are willing to give us another day——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I have nothing to do with that. You can make the request to Government.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: I have something really very important to say but if you will not permit me I will not be able to do so.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN (Leader of the House): What is the use of giving another day if the Members do not talk about the subject under discussion but attack the British Administration instead?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Honourable gentleman has not referred to the motion before the House at all. He has been only pointing out what gross injustice has been done by Government in the past.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: May I respectfully say that if you will read the speeches in the House of Commons, they started with dissertations on the benefits of British administration, they went on to develop the theme that the problem of famine in India was for Indians to settle and that Indian merchants were responsible for the famine, and therefore what I have been saying is relevant by way of answer to all that was said by Mr. Amery and many of Mr. Amery's supporters. ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: It is no use referring to the House of Commons. I would cite to you the example of the Honourable Pandit Kunzru. Will you now proceed and finish?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: I shall try to emulate the difficult example of my Honourable friend, Dr. Kunzru, who let me remind you, Sir, spoke for 90 minutes and I also hope, Sir, that in what I have to say now I shall try to confine myself to subjects which may be pleasantive for Government to hear. I am however, not concerned at all with what Sir Mahomed Usman considers relevant or not. He is no judge of these matters.

*THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: It is very kind of you to have complimented me but may I say that the remarks made by the Leader of the House with regard to what fell from my Honourable friend, Mr. Mahtha, were not justified? It cannot be said that my Honourable friend has said thing that were irrelevant or things which should not be said in the course of the debate today. While discussing the economic situation in the country we are, of course, discussing the responsibility of the British Government for the present state of things. We have not got the final authority in our hands. The final responsibility was recognised by several members of the House of Commons and Mr. Amery himself as that of the British Government.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: May I submit that in furtherance to what my Honourable friend, Dr. Kunzru, has said I am sure that we are entitled on this occasion to ask the British Government to leave this country immediately because they are not able to deal with the situation at all. (Applause.) We are in the midst of a crisis. We are being starved. And the leader of the House thinks that we cannot say how the starvation has come to us.

Sir, I propose, however, for the rest of my speech to confine myself now strictly to the situation in Bengal only in spite of all the provocation that has been offered to me by Sir Mahomed Usman.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I do not know how long you are going to speak. You asked for 40 minutes and I have given you more than that.

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA : I thank you, Sir, for your indulgence and the indulgence of the House.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : There are other speakers also. I would have allowed you to speak if there had not been other speakers. I do not wish to disappoint them.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA : I think I have the permission of the House in general to continue. I feel flattered in this that I clearly see that the House, leaving out the paid benchmen of Government on the treasury benches find it useful to listen to me. However to proceed on with the debate let me say, Sir, that Mr. Amery and the Government of India have both gone and laid the whole blame of the present crisis at the door o Provincial Autonomy, an autonomy which is an utter farce. Sir Edward Benthall in reply to a question in the Legislative Assembly on the 12th of this month said as follows :—

"The responsibility for adequate supplies rests with the Provincial Government, although, under existing arrangements, the Railways and Port Administrations have the first place to secure supplies to the best of their ability....."

The first priority is thus given to the Railway and to the Port Administrations, but, Sir Edward did not mention the various Arms of the Army, perhaps because they did not come under his jurisdiction although the Army is the biggest buyer today and against whom none can compete in the market. Apart from all this, Sir, may I know if the Bengal Government could go and buy food freely in India for the unprivileged classes, whose lot and privilege today is to starve and die ? Could they go and buy food for them freely even in Section 93 Provinces, or, if even when they could buy there, could they carry the material bought to Bengal without the aid of the Central Government ? It is the Central Government that rules all over the land through its agents, the Governors in the Provinces, and it is a wonder, perhaps part of a plan, to have kept the question of the responsibility of the Governor wholly in the back ground. The Governor interferes in matters of administrative detail. What was the Governor doing when the people were starving ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Feasting !

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA : He was snoring ! It was his duty to keep the Government of India informed of developments and an approaching all-enveloping crisis. But the Governor is Caesar's wife, and must be kept above suspicion and above reproach.

Sir, I shall now come to another point. The principal factor in the creation of a shortage of supplies has undoubtedly been the purchasing policy of the military Department. The requirements of the military are calculated on a lavish scale and there is therefore such a huge waste in foodstuffs at the hands of the military. This point was emphatically stated by Sir Frederick James in the other House only the other day. The military purchases are made in large quantities and at recklessly high prices. The reserves built up by them are also considerable. These are matters of common knowledge and no amount of official understatement of the situation can convince the people.

In the case of the Civil Departments of the Central Government officers stationed in Bengal who are in receipt of Rs. 300 per month or less are entitled to get foodgrains at concessional rates for their individual consumption. In the case of the Railway Department, however, all railway servants, irrespective of pay and including their families, are entitled to purchase at concessional rates. This is what was stated by Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava in reply to a question in the Assembly on the 9th of this month. In the case of railways again they have their independent purchasing agencies in addition to their supplies from the Provincial Governments whenever possible. The Railway Department has not yet made any statement to indicate the basis on which the requirements of the railway officials and their families had been fixed. It is understood that the standard of allowances in this matter is very high. It is moreover a most curious phenomenon that even highly paid railway officials, whatever their status, are entitled to purchase at concessional rates. There is a widely prevalent belief that this unusually liberal treatment of the railway officials of all ranks has resulted in the withdrawal of an inappropriately large quantity of foodgrains during the most critical weeks when Bengal's food position was most precarious. As important a man like Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, in his note appended to the Gregory Committee report, has referred to the general

impression that even the Government have frequently resorted to the black market. It is in the Gregory Committee's report. It is believed that the railways have particularly done so, and while their private agents made purchases from the black market at high prices, the recipients of the concession are in some cases reported to have supplied the black market with the excess of their liberal allowances of foodgrains.

I shall not, Sir, for want of time, refer to the mad rush made for the purchase of foodgrains by industrial employers, leading to a steep rise in prices. There will be other speakers who will deal with it. In that connection perhaps I might have had to refer to a speech of my Honourable friend Mr. Parker on the last occasion, but I shall not do so now.

I shall now close with only one more point, and that point is one to which I want to draw the special attention of Government because I appeal to them that it is in their interest that they must clear up the allegation. That important point is this. The Government of India owe to this House a clear and categorical statement with reference to the charge which the Honourable Sir Baldev Singh, Minister of the Punjab, brought against them of having made a profit of one rupee per maund on wheat purchased on behalf of the Central Government in the Punjab and sold to the deficit provinces.

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY : They admitted it.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA : Let them say it here. Your admission is not of the same value as the admission of Government made here in this House.

One other point mentioned by the said Minister calls for a clear explanation. In the same statement, he made the allegation that the Director of Food Supplies of the Punjab refused the offer of Rs. 28 per maund for one and a half lakh maunds of rice made by official agency on behalf of two private firms in Bengal as the price fixed by the Punjab at the time was Rs. 17 per maund. I am reliably informed that it was Justice Braund, the Regional Food Commissioner of Bengal, who, in a letter to the Regional Commissioner in the Punjab area, requested him to allow two private firms to make this purchase at that enhanced price on behalf of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, adding that the Bengal Chamber of Commerce was a more efficient distributing agency than the Government of Bengal itself. The Honourable the Food Member should make a statement as to whether it is the policy of the Government to encourage the Bengal Chamber of Commerce or any other organisation of capitalists to make purchases independently of the Government agency and at prices in excess of the locally prevailing price, as alleged by the Punjab Minister.

It is a curious fact that the trade agent of the Government of Bengal is paid a commission on all purchases not on the basis of quantity of the foodgrains purchased, but on the amount paid as price, with the result that the agent, not being above human failings, welcomes as high a price as possible in order that the amount of his own commission may also be correspondingly larger.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Are you sure of the facts ? Are you sure that he is paid on the basis of money value and not quantity ?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA : I will prove it to you. I will produce the proof before the House if the President will allow me. If you come to my house I will show you the proof—I will prove every word of what I have said. I certainly promise that.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I think the Food Department should make an inquiry into it.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : If the Honourable Member interrupts in this way, he should not blame the Chair if he does not get an opportunity of discussing the matter fully tomorrow or on the third day.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA : Sir, in the case of no other province, as far as I can judge, is the commission paid on the basis of price. Here is one indication as to why the price of foodgrains, particularly rice purchased through the Bengal Government's agent, has not gone down in spite of increasing supplies. Is it any wonder that suspicions about the prevalence of corruption among responsible parties are so very strong ?

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Rai Bahadur Sri Narain Mahtha.]

Before I sit down, Sir, I just want to make two recommendations. For want of time I shall just enumerate the points without trying to develop my arguments on them. The first is this. The Government spokesman made an appeal this morning for co-operation and restoration of confidence. How can this be done ? Government have lost the confidence of the people on account of their actions. I would suggest to Government that here is an opportunity. They must forthwith release the members of the Congress Working Committee and the members of the All-India Congress Committee. They should see what they do under the present circumstances, and when their attitude is known, they should release all Congress prisoners. Whether I like it or not or whether you like it or not, it *is* true that *they* are whom the country trusts to a very large extent, and this Government can never answer to humanity the charge that at a time when there was so much humanitarian work to be done, *so many of trusted Indians* were kept in jail, most of them without trial.

Secondly, Sir, many have in the Press and at other places suggested the buying of the *aman* crop. This you must not do. No one trusts you, and if you took an action of this kind, there would be panic. You should leave the crop to the people, to be consumed by them through the normal channels of trade.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : These are your suggestions ? It surprises me to hear them.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA : Yes, these are my recommendations. Government should, by import of foodgrains, feed the population in Calcutta and the industrial population in Bengal and leave the *aman* crop entirely to flow through the normal channels of trade for the consumption of the rural population.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : What about the urban areas ?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA : I have suggested that Calcutta and the other industrial towns should be fed by Government from imported foodgrains, or foodgrains which they can arrange to get from surplus provinces. That I believe, Sir, will serve the purpose, so far as food is concerned. Clothing and shelter and medical relief will still have to be arranged. The resources of the Government and the people will have to be mobilised to the fullest.

Thirdly, Sir, what I would recommend to the Government of India and to the Leader of the Muslim League Party is that they should suggest to the Government of Bengal to form a Food Council consisting of representatives of all important political parties with large and summary powers to deal with the situation.

I do not want to multiply suggestions because no scheme or machinery can be made to work successfully unless there is the fullest earnestness and drive to do so. Let Government rise to the occasion, otherwise History, which never forgets, shall answer back. Let me remind this wooden Government that the only acceptable form in which *even God* may dare appear before a famished people is food and wages for work to buy food with.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : May I suggest, Sir, that we sit a little late today, say till 5-30 P.M. ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : Sir, we have all got engagements. I therefore respectfully suggest that we should adjourn now.

ELECTION TO THE FOOD DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : With reference to the announcement made by me on the 17th November, 1943 regarding nomination to the Standing Committee to advise on subjects in the Department of Food, I have to announce that the following Honourable Members have been nominated for election to that Committee :—

1. The Honourable Mr. Susil Kumar Roy Chowdhry.
2. The Honourable Mr. V. V. Kalikar.
3. The Honourable Saiyad Mohamed Padshah Sahib Bahadur.
4. The Honourable Mr. Khurshid Ali Khan.
5. The Honourable Mr. P. N. Sapru.

There are five candidates for five seats and I declare them duly elected.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Saturday, the 20th November, 1943.

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

COUNCIL OF STATE

Saturday, 20th November, 1943

The Council met in the Council Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

TEXT OF AGREEMENT FOR, AND INDIA'S PARTICIPATION IN, THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION.

105. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Have Government received any information with regard to the revised text of draft agreement for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration ; and has India been invited to attend the first Session of the Council of the new organisation ? If so, what is its exact scope and object, and by whom is India going to be represented ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI : The Government of India have received the revised text of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration Agreement and a copy has been placed in the Library of the House. The Government of India were invited to send a representative to the first Session of the Council of the Administration, and have nominated Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, their Agent General in Washington, as their representative. It is expected that the Council will discuss at this Session all matters relating to relief administration and policy.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : May I enquire whether India will be required to give any contribution towards the relief work to be started under the U. N. R. R. A. agreement, and if so what is the amount ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI : The agreement contemplates that all participating countries should make a suitable contribution. No figure has yet been suggested for India.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Is any particular procedure laid down for fixing the contribution to be paid by the various nations taking part in the agreement ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI The agreement says that contributions to be made by each Member-Government shall be subject to the observance of the normal constitutional procedure of the country.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : That means that the contribution every year will require the assent of the Legislative Assembly ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI : That is so.

OBSERVATIONS BY SIR COLIN GARBETT REGARDING PROFITEERING IN WHEAT SUPPLIES.

106. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : (*a*) Has the attention of the Government been drawn to the following observations made by Sir Colin Garbett, Regional Food Commissioner, Northern India, at a meeting of the Calcutta Rotary Club about the end of September last dealing with allegation of profiteering on wheat supplies :—

> " The Bengal Government had looked into their accounts, and found that through miscalculations they had been making a profit of about Rs. 40 lakhs. To amend this they had reduced the price of rice to Rs. 20 per maund.....The Government of India with whom the Punjab Government were in complete agreement, were absolutely determined that no Government or their agents would be allowed to make profits out of commodities despatched for purposes of relief " ?

(*b*) Will Government explain in details how the Bengal Government have been able to make a profit of about Rs. 40 lakhs ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : (*a*) I have seen the report which is not an accurate reproduction of the words used.

(*b*) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the Press Statement issued on the 9th October, 1943, a copy of which is placed on the table.

PRESS NOTE.

WHEAT PRICES IN BENGAL.

Central Government Explains Position.

The attention of the Government of India has been drawn to the anxiety prevailing in the two main wheat exporting provinces lest the Government of Bengal may have derived, or should henceforth derive, an undue addition to Provincial Revenues from the sale of wheat exported or to be exported from those provinces to Bengal under arrangements made by the Government of India. The Government of India have accordingly obtained from the Government of Bengal a statement of position which is as follows :—

2. All wheat imported from other provinces under arrangements made by the Government of India is held in Government custody. Since the first of May last wheat is being sold to mills at a fixed price. Consignments received prior to that date were made over to the mills direct at cost price. The mills are allowed to sell their wheat products at ex-mill prices fixed under the Defence of India Rules corresponding to the retail rates for such products which are also fixed statutorily. The schedule of rates in force from the first May is as follows :—

Period.	Rate for sales of wheat to Mills.	Ex-Mill prices atta and flour respectively.	Retail prices atta and flour respectively.
	Rs. per md.	Rs. per md.	Rs. per md.
1st May to 1st August	15 8 0	19 0 0 19 0 0	20 0 0 20 0 0
1st August to 20th September . . .	14 4 0	16 8 0 19 0 0	17 8 0 20 0 0
20th September onward	12 12 0	14 0 0 19 0 0	15 0 0 20 0 0

3. During the four months May to August 1943 inclusive the Bengal Government have derived a gross revenue of Rs. 33·44 lakhs on a turn-over of 19·84 lakhs maunds of imported wheat. This has been derived solely from sales of wheat to mills. The Bengal Government are not concerned in any of the subsequent transactions. In considering this revenue figure it has to be conceded that the Government of Bengal fixed their selling prices of wheat to the mills having regard to a number of estimated charges for handling storage, delivery, etc. which in view of the poor deliveries of wheat in most of the months in question were never actually incurred. It will be noticed that the Government of Bengal effected a reduction of Rs. 1/4/- per maund in their sale price of wheat with effect from the 1st August when it became apparent that receipts were accumulating. The price now in force is Rs. 12/12/- per maund which, regard being had to the f.o.r. prices current in the Punjab and the United Provinces respectively, will represent an actual loss to the Bengal Government. On the footing that the quantities still due under the Basic Plan are exported to Bengal in an even monthly flow, it is estimated that the Bengal Government's loss on sales of imported wheat to mills over the remaining period of the revised Basic Plan will amount to Rs. 40·3 lakhs which after deducting the accumulated revenue of Rs. 33·44 lakhs will leave a net loss to the Bengal Government of Rs. 6·86 lakhs. The Government of India are satisfied that the selling price of wheat now fixed by the Government of Bengal is reasonable.

4. As regards the 'Milling Differential' allowed to the mills the Government of India have decided that the question should be gone into by the Regional Commissioner, Eastern Region, Mr. Justice Braund, with the aid of a Cost Accounts Officer of the Government of India, with a view to ascertaining whether the "Differential" allowed to the mills, and the consequential retail prices to the public are reasonable.

5. The above calculations do not include imported wheat products, which the Government of Bengal have been selling at the statutory prices fixed for ex-mill sales detailed in paragraph 2. The gross revenue received by the Government of Bengal on re-sales of imported wheat products up to the end of August 1943 amounts to Rs. 6·32 lakhs. In regard to this revenue, it would be undesirable and unworkable in practice to fix different sets of wholesale and retail prices for local and imported wheat products. The question of wiping out the accumulated revenue on wheat products is, however, under the active consideration of the Government of Bengal.

FOOD DEPARTMENT.
New Delhi, October 9, 1943.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Will the Honourable Member mind telling us what this Press Note of the 9th October said on this point ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : The Press Note is with reference to the profits alleged to have been made by the Bengal Government.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : What is the profit that the Bengal Government admit to have made ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : 33·44 lakhs from sale to mills.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Is it in regard to the purchase of wheat or other foodgrains ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Purchase of wheat.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: What is the price at which wheat is being now given to the trade and the price at which wheat product is sold?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The price to the mills is Rs. 12/12/- per maund and the price to the consumers is Rs. 15.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Since when has this new price been fixed?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: 20th of September.

USE OF SWIMMING POOL IN THE LADY HARDINGE MEDICAL COLLEGE, NEW DELHI BY MALES.

107. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Is it a fact that the swimming pool situated inside the premises of the Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi, which was hitherto confined to the use of ladies has recently been thrown open to men particularly to members of the armed forces. If so, are Government aware that this innovation has created much resentment among the ladies of the College and the public generally?

(*b*) Do Government propose to restore the normal position by rigidly excluding members of the male sex from the use of the swimming pool, which is exclusively meant for the ladies College?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: (*a*) The swimming pool has not been thrown open to men. The Swimming Bath Committee, which consists of members of the staff and students of the college, accepted a proposal that on Saturday evenings during the long vacation from 1st June to 15th September when the bath was reserved exclusively for the staff members of the staff should be permitted to invite guests both men and women. These guest nights were held only on one or two occasions. On two occasions the Committee also invited expert male swimmers to give swimming, diving and life saving demonstrations for the students.

(*b*) The Lady Hardinge Medical College is under the control of a Registered Association and attention of the Association will be drawn to the desirability of reserving the pool for staff and students exclusively.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Is the Honourable Member aware of the report widely current in Delhi that on Saturdays at least soldiers were freely allowed to use the swimming pool in the Lady Hardinge Medical College?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: The information is what I have given, *viz.*, that only on two occasions some people were invited and I am now inviting the attention of the Association to reserve the pool for staff and students exclusively.

PROPOSAL OF SIND GOVERNMENT TO PROSCRIBE THE "SATYARTH PRAKASH."

108. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Is it a fact that the Sind Government have proposed to the Government of India to proscribe the "Satyarth Prakash" the chief religious book of the Arya Samajists, or certain portions of it?

(*b*) Is it a fact that no Hindu Ministers of the provincial Government ever agreed to this proposal on the ground that the book, being a scripture or any portion of it?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: (*a*) No.

(*b*) I have no information.

CONFERENCE IN LONDON ON POST-WAR CIVIL AVIATION.

109. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Is it a fact, as stated by Lord Beaverbrook, Lord Privy Seal, that "arrangements are being made for a conference in London before the end of the year, between the British Dominions, and Indian representatives and discussions between the British and U. S. Governments are expected to follow," on the question of Post War Civil Aviation?

(*b*) Have Government decided as to who will be India's representatives; and will these representatives be only officials and Europeans? Will Government keep in view the general desire of the Indians that India's representatives mainly be non-official Indians?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: (*a*) The Conference between British, Dominion and Indian representatives has already been held. Discussions with the Governments of the U. S. A. and U. S. S. R. are expected to follow.

(*b*) The High Commissioner for India represented India at the London Conference. The reply to the last part of the question is in the affirmative.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Have Government placed a copy of the discussions that took place in the Library of the House?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: I have not yet received an official report of the discussions that have taken place.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: May we take it, Sir, that when that copy is received it will be made available to the Members?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: I will have to consider it at the proper time.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOUTH EAST ASIA COMMAND IN INDIA.

110. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Will Government make a statement relating to the financial implications of the establishment of the South East Asia Command in India, in so far as they affect India and the manner in which the resources of this country might be devoted in the operations to be conducted by this command in India?

(*b*) Is there any truth in the report that His Majesty's Government is pressing the Government of India to modify the Indo-British financial settlement of 1939? What is the position with regard to this settlement?

(*c*) In view of the fact that the campaign to be conducted by this command would be the concern of inter Allied Governments are Government prepared to resist the proposal that India should bear any additional expenditure for the operations of this command?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: (*a*) I would refer the Honourable Member to the reply given by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief to part (*c*) of the Honourable Mr. Kumarsankar Ray Chaudhury's question No. 97 on the 19th November 1943.

(*b*) No proposals have been received from His Majesty's Government in this connection.

(*c*) Does not arise.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: May we ask, Sir, whether the present forces on India's frontier are under His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief's orders or under the South East Asia Command?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: I have nothing to add, Sir, to the information provided by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in his reply to yesterday's question to which I have already referred.

TRANSPORT OF RICE FROM KARACHI TO BENGAL BY THE SCINDIA STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY.

111. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Will Government state why the vessel berthed by the Scindia Steam Navigation Co. at Karachi, to carry foodgrains specially rice to the famine stricken Province of Bengal free of freight was allowed to carry only about 1,352 tons, instead of her capacity for cargo, which should be over 6,500 tons? Is it a fact that the Government said that they could not see their way to allow so much quantity of rice and foodgrains to be shipped by this vessel? If so, why?

(*b*) Is it a fact that the bulk of the cargo was consigned to the Director of Civil Supplies, Bengal, and the balance to the Ram Krishna Mission, Calcutta, and nothing was allowed to be consigned to Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, to whom the vessel was offered? If so, why?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: (*a*) It is not a fact that the steamer was not allowed to carry its full load of foodgrains. On the contrary, the facts are that the Scindia Company was unwilling to carry foodgrains to Calcutta which were consigned on Government account, or any foodgrains which were not free gifts. The value of foodgrains sufficient to fill the ship would have been about 20 lakhs

of rupees, and since that amount was not forthcoming as a free gift, the vessel loaded about 5,000 tons of commercial cargo for Calcutta and other ports, although the Sind Government offered to fill the ship with foodgrains consigned to the Bengal Government.

(*b*) In accordance with general instructions issued by the Government of India on the subject, all consignments for charitable organisations are sent formally to the Director of Civil Supplies, Bengal, on account of the charitable organisations concerned. According to the information of the Sind Government no grain was offered to be consigned by that ship to the gentleman named.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Did the Government of Sind, or any other authorities, discourage in any way the export of grain by the Scindia Steam Navigation Company's ship to Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee's Committee, that is the Bengal Relief Committee, of which he is Vice-Chairman ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: As I have said, Sir, according to the information of the Sind Government no offer was made to Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Am I correct, Sir, in understanding that the Scindia's did not agree to carry any foodgrains except free gifts ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: That is correct.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: And they advertise so much.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: They said that they would charge nothing on wheat which was being sent as a free gift to Bengal, which was a perfectly reasonable position to take up.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: But they did load the ship with other cargoes.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Please don't go on discussing among yourselves. Our time is very valuable.

EXECUTION OF FOUR INDIAN CIVILIANS AS ENEMY AGENTS OF JAPAN.

112. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government make a statement giving details of the four Indian civilian nationals resident in Malaya who were recently sent by the Japanese to India for the work of espionage, and were condemned to death under the Enemy Agents Ordinance ? Which High Court reviewed their cases ? Have special precautions been taken to frustrate such designs ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: As the Honourable Member will readily appreciate, it would not be in the interests of security to disclose further details than those that have already appeared in the press concerning these four persons and their fifth column task. The Honourable member may rest assured that all necessary measures have been taken to counter these activities.

REPRESENTATION OF INDIA AT THE EMPIRE AIR CONFERENCE.

113. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Is it a fact that in the Empire Air Conference, which was held in London in October, India was represented by Sir Samual Runganathan, High Commissioner in London, Sir Frederick Tymms, and Mr. Ham Rumbold of the India Office ? Was no capable non-official Indian available to be included as a member ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: India was represented at the Conference referred to, by the High Commissioner for India, and Sir Frederick Tymms and Mr. Rumbold were associated with him as technical experts. As the Conference consisted of official representatives only of the Governments of the United Kingdom, Dominions and India, no question arose of a suitable non-official Indian being available.

STATEMENT OF MR. AMERY REGARDING UTILISATION OF THE PROFITS MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL OUT OF THE PURCHASES OF WHEAT.

114. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the following statement made by Mr. Amery,

the Secretary of State for India, in the House of Commons on or about the 21st October 1943, in reply to a question on the food situation in Bengal :—

"I understand the Bengal Government did resell grain at a higher price than that at which it was obtained from the Punjab ; and that the profits made were subsequently devoted to providing food for the poor" ?

(*b*) Will Government state what was the amount of profits which accrued to the Bengal Government by thus reselling the grain to the mills of Bengal at a higher rate ?

(*c*) Will Government state whether it is a fact that instead of spending money out of their revenues for "providing food to the poor," the Bengal Government merely devoted the profits which they made out of this transaction, for the relief of the famine stricken people ?

(*d*) Will Government state whether it is a fact that the mills in Bengal to which the Bengal Government sold the grain at a higher price, hoarded the grain thus obtained or offered it to the public for sale at a still higher price than that at which they had obtained it from the Bengal Government ?

(*e*) If the Bengal mills, or others had hoarded the grains what steps have been taken against them for the offence of hoarding ?

(*f*) Will Government state what steps they have taken against the Bengal Government for profiteering, which has been declared to be a criminal act in the case of private individuals ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the Press Note*, dated 9th October, 1943, published on the subject and to Government of India's Resolution No. F-10 (1)-Secy./43, dated 3rd November, 1943, copies of which are placed on the table.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
DEPARTMENT OF FOOD.
Resolution.

No. F. 10 (1)-Secy/43. *New Delhi, the 3rd November, 1943.*

The Government of India have had under consideration measures for ensuring that the retail cost of wheat and wheat-products sold to the public in Bengal is reasonable and that no undue element of profit is included in those prices. It has been recently announced publicly that the Government of Bengal have reduced their selling price of wheat to the millers by Rs. 1-4, and the Government of India are satisfied that the reduced selling price fixed by the Bengal Government of Rs. 12-12 per maund of wheat sold to the flour Mills in Calcutta is reasonable.

2. In order to satisfy themselves that there is no excessive element of profit in the prices charged for wheat-products at subsequent stages, the Government of India have decided to appoint a Committee of Inquiry, consisting of (1) Honourable Mr. Justice H. B. L. Braund, Bar-at-Law, Regional Commissioner (Food), Eastern Region, and (2) Mr. A. L. Cooke, Chief Cost Accounts Officer, Supply Finance Department.

3. The terms of reference to the Committee are as follows :—

(I) To enquire—

(*a*) whether the profit accruing to the flour mills from the production and sale at the ex-mill statutory prices of wheat products made from wheat purchased from the Government of Bengal is reasonable, having regard to such variations in output and other conditions as may from time to time arise and, if not, what adjustment ought to be made so as to secure a reasonable rate of profit in the interest of the public and all parties concerned.

(b) whether the profit accruing to retailers in the sale at the statutory retail prices of wheat products purchased from the mills is reasonable.

(II) To make recommendations as to the proportions in which atta, flour and bran should be produced by the mills in Calcutta out of wheat bought from Government, and the respective prices at which they should be sold to the public.

Sd. W. H. J. CHRISTIE,
Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

FEEDING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ARMIES IN INDIA BY THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

115. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : In view of the critical food situation in different parts of the country, specially in Bengal, and also in Bihar, have Government made representations to the British Government

* Not reprinted. Please see page 124 of these Debates.

that the United Nations should feed their own armies in India, and thereby release sufficient stock of foodgrains ? If so, what is the result ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : This matter is under the consideration of Government of India in consultation with His Majesty's Government.

REMARK MADE BY MR. PAUL APPLEBY AT THE UNITED NATIONS FOOD CONFERENCE AT HOT-SPRING.

116. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Are Government aware of the following remark made by Mr. Paul Appleby, Vice-Chairman of the United States Delegation at the United Nations Food Conference, held at Hot-Springs :—

" There can be no more powerful force to grip the minds of men than the simple thought that the world can and should and must be adequately fed—every one, and everywhere " ?

In view of the above, will Government state what steps have the U. S. A. taken in the way of providing food and shipping to relieve the dire distress arising out of food shortage and starvation in Bengal, and elsewhere in India ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The Honourable member is referred to the reply given to his question No. 79 on the 19th November, 1943.

TROUBLE GIVEN TO MUSLIM INCOME-TAX PAYERS IN DELHI.

117. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Are Government aware that the Muslim Tax-payers in Delhi are usually given trouble by the Officers and Inspectors of the Income-tax Department ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES : No, Sir.

DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT IN MATTER OF ADJOURNMENT OF INCOME-TAX CASES.

118. THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Are Government aware that the Muslim Tax-payers in Delhi are not given adjournments ? Is it a fact that other tax-payers are given every facility ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES : Government have no reason to believe that the same facilities are not being given to Muslim Tax-payers as to other tax-payers.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Will Government ask for information from the Department concerned ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES : We have already asked for information, Sir, and so far as we can gather there is no basis whatsoever for the insinuations contained in these two questions.

RESIGNATION BY MR. BLAIR OF HIS APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF SECRETARY, BENGAL.

119. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Is it a fact that Mr. Blair who was Chief Secretary to the Bengal Government had to resign his office ? If so, what were the circumstances under which he had to resign ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : No. The second part of the question does not arise.

NUMBER OF PERSONS ARRESTED AND DETAINED IN DELHI UNDER THE DEFENCE OF INDIA RULES.

120. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Will Government state—

(*a*) the number of persons arrested in Delhi and detained under (i) Rule 26 and (ii) Rule 129 of the D. I. R. from the 9th August, 1942, to the end of October, 1943 ; and

(*b*) the number of persons convicted in Delhi under (i) the D. I. R. and (ii) the Cr. P. C. for political offences during the same period ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : (*a*) 164 persons were arrested under Defence Rule 129 during the period 9th August, 1942, to 15th October, 1943, the latest date up to which information is available. Out of this total, 73 persons were subsequently detained under Defence Rule 26, the remaining 91 being detained under Defence Rule 129 for varying periods not exceeding two months. In addition 32 persons were arrested and detained at once under Rule 26.

(*b*) Government do not recognise the term "Political offences". The number of persons convicted under the Defence of India Rules in connection with the disturbances during the above period was 66. Convictions in connection with those disturbances during this period under all laws other than the Defence of India Rules totalled 543. Such of these persons as were convicted of offences not involving violence have been classified as "Civil Disturbance Prisoners, 1942", a special class created for them by the Punjab Government. Such as were convicted of offences involving violence are, however, treated as ordinary convicted prisoners and have been classified accordingly.

PLACE OF DETENTION OF DEFENCE OF INDIA RULE PRISONERS OF DELHI.

121. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: (i) Will Government state whether it is a fact—

(*a*) that all or nearly all the persons detained by the Delhi Administration under Rule 26 of the D. I. R. are kept in the Punjab jails and that the nearest jail used for this purpose is at Ferozepore;

(*b*) that in Ferozepore they are kept in the camp jail which is meant for "C" class prisoners; and

(*c*) that there are no covered baths in this jail and that the latrine arrangements are such as to secure no privacy?

(ii) If the answers to (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) are in the affirmative what action do Government propose to take in regard to (*b*) and (*c*)?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: (*a*) All security prisoners detained by orders made under Defence Rule 26 by the Chief Commissioner are transferred to the Punjab to a jail to be determined by the Inspector General of Prisons. Such prisoners as are detained for reasons connected with the Congress movement are transferred to the Ferozepore District Jail.

(*b*) and (*c*) I have no information.

(*d*) Does not arise.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Why have Government no information on this subject? These people being their prisoners, is it not their duty to find out the conditions relating to their detention?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: If the Honourable member will refer to Defence of India Rule 26, sub-rule (*5*), he will find a provision for determination of conditions of detention by the Provincial Government in whose charge these security prisoners are placed. In this case, it is the Punjab Government, and it is for the Punjab Government to determine the conditions of their detention.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: These persons are detained by the Delhi Administration: why are they being sent to Ferozepore in the Punjab?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: I believe, Sir, it is in accordance with the principles of modern penology that different classes of prisoners should be kept in different classes of jails. Such differentiation is not possible in Delhi, but it is possible in the Punjab. For that reason these prisoners were sent to the Punjab.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Why has the Punjab been specially selected for these prisoners? There are other provinces also. Why has the Punjab been selected for this purpose?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: There are various reasons which my Honourable friend himself could probably appreciate. In the first place, the Punjab and Delhi jails form one unit; and, secondly, the Punjab is conveniently adjacent.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: With regard to part (*b*) of my question, may I ask the Honourable member whether it is not the duty of the Government of India to find out whether prisoners classed as A and B are kept in jails which are meant for C class prisoners?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: I have already answered that question. It is the business of the Punjab Government, and not of the Central Government, to determine the jails in which these prisoners are kept and the conditions of their detention, and the Government of India are satisfied that the conditions in the case of the Punjab are reasonably suitable.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Are Government aware of the conditions prevailing in the Ferozepore Jail? The point of the question is that the Punjab Government should not have the power to treat A and B class prisoners as C class prisoners merely because under Defence of India Rule 26 they have the power to determine the conditions under which a detenu shall be kept.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: The classification of prisoners is a matter which has been the subject of correspondence between the Central Government and the Provincial Government, and substantial agreement has been reached as regards that classification. As the Honourable member is aware, in the case of Central Government prisoners and in the case of many provinces this particular class of security prisoner is kept in a separate class, and there are separate conditions laid down for their detention. The Government of India have no reason to suppose that those conditions are other than suitable. I cannot undertake to make inquiries about individual complaints as regards such things as baths and other amenities.

CLASSIFICATION OF DEFENCE OF INDIA RULE PRISONERS OF DELHI.

122. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: (*a*)Will Government state whether it is a fact that some of the persons arrested and detained under Rule 26 of the D. I. R. by the Delhi Administration after the 9th August, 1942 were classified as Security Prisoners class I and the rest as class II Security Prisoners?

(*b*) Is it a fact that so long as they remained in the District Jail, Delhi, they were treated as such and allowed all the privileges of Security Prisoners?

(*c*) Is it also a fact that soon after their transfer to the Punjab jails these privileges were withdrawn? If so, why?

(*d*) Was this fact brought to the notice of the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, telegraphically by some of the detenus soon after their privileges were withdrawn in September, 1942? If so, what action did he take in the matter?

(*e*) What action do Government propose to take now to redress the grievances of the detenus? Do they propose to ask the Punjab Government to accord to them the rights they are entitled to or transfer them back to the District Jail, Delhi?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: (*a*) This is correct up to September 5th, 1942. From that date, however, in accordance with the orders of the Government of India, security prisoners detained in Delhi in connection with the Congress movement were placed in a single special class.

(*b*) Security prisoners detained in the Delhi District Jail are treated in accordance with the Central Government Security Prisoners Order, 1942, and instructions issued thereunder from time to time.

(*c*) Central Government security prisoners detained in a Province are treated according to the rules current in that Province. There are certain differences of detail between the treatment accorded under the Central Government Security Prisoners Order and the Punjab Government's rules, but I am satisfied that the treatment in matters of principle is substantially the same.

(*d*) Yes. The Chief Commissioner informed the prisoners that their conditions of detention were to be determined by the Punjab Government.

(*e*) As for the first part I do not admit that there are legitimate grievances: the latter part does not arise.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: With regard to part (*c*) of the question, may I inquire whether the prisoners are allowed to interview persons and to write and receive letters, and to receive books and newspapers, as security prisoners detained under the orders of the Government of India in Delhi are?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: May I point out to the Honourable member that the supplementary question which he has now put is covered by later questions which I am answering this morning?

SUPPLY OF INDIAN NEWSPAPERS TO DEFENCE OF INDIA RULE PRISONERS OF DELHI.

123. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: (a) Will Government state whether it is a fact that the Delhi detenus detained under Rule 26 of the

D. I. R. who are at present in the Punjab jails are not allowed to receive any newspaper published at Delhi except the "Statesman" although the "Hindustan Times", the daily "Tej" and the "Vir Arjuna" are allowed to the detenus in the District Jail, Delhi? If so, will Government take steps to have this restriction removed?

(*b*) Is it a fact that a written application made some time ago by Lala Deshbandhu Gupta for permission to get the "Hindustan Times", the "Tej" and some British and American periodicals including the "Nation and Statesman" and "Foreign Affairs" at his own cost was rejected? If so, why? Do Government propose to take suitable action to enable him to get the above-mentioned papers?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: (*a*) and (*b*) I have no information on these matters which are for the Punjab Government. All I know is that the Punjab Government do allow newspapers.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: With regard to the Honourable Member's reply to my supplementary question to Question No. 122, may I point out that the previous question that I asked related to a number of privileges and not merely to the receipt of newspapers?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: I do not think the Honourable member heard my reply. I said I was covering those points in answer to later questions—not to the succeeding question.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: As regards part (*b*), is there any reason why a prisoner who is willing to pay for a periodical should not be allowed to receive it so long as the periodical is not regarded as objectionable by the authorities?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: I have tried to make it clear already that in these matters of detail the Central Government do not feel justified in interfering with the discretion of Provincial Government to fix conditions. They have allowed newspapers. It will not be proper for the Government of India to prescribe what newspapers they should allow.

PRIVILEGES OF SECURITY PRISONERS.

124. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: (*a*) Are security prisoners allowed newspapers, books and interviews in all provinces? If not what are the provinces in which they are not allowed all or any of these privileges?

(*b*) Are interviews allowed in the case of security prisoners in the U. P.? Are they allowed to write letters to their relatives or friends on domestic matters? If so, how many letters per week can they send and receive?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: (*a*) Newspapers and books are allowed to security prisoners in all Provinces. Interviews are ordinarily allowed to all Classes of security prisoners except in the Punjab and the United Provinces. In the former Province they are not allowed to Congress security prisoners. In the latter Province they were, except in special cases, refused to all classes of security prisoners, but I understand that the question is at present under further examination by the Provincial Government.

(*b*) I have explained the position with regard to interviews in the United Provinces. Security prisoners in that Province may write and receive one letter per month on domestic matters.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Do Government mean, in view of the intention expressed by them some time ago to secure uniformity in respect of the rules relating to detenus, to persuade the Government of the United Provinces to make the rules relating to the writing of letters to relatives or friends on domestic matters as liberal as those made by the Government of India themselves?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: It is a fact that substantial uniformity has been achieved as between the Centre and the Provinces on these matters. As regards the conditions in the United Provinces especially in regard to correspondence, the matter is at present the subject of correspondence between the Central Government and the Government of the United Provinces.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: With regard to part (*a*), the refusal of the Punjab Government to allow Congress security prisoners to have interviews, is that matter too under correspondence?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : No, Sir. Government have not regarded the matter of interviews as a large question of principle, and they are not, therefore, pursuing the question with the Punjab. I may add that interviews are allowed with legal advisers under certain conditions.

PLACING OF RULES RELATING TO SECURITY PRISONERS IN THE COUNCIL LIBRARY.

125. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : (a) With reference the reply given by Government to my question No. 76 on the 4th August, 1943, will Government state whether they have placed the rules relating to security prisoners made by those Provincial Governments which do not treat them as confidential in the Council Library?

(b) Have Government been able to secure the consent of the other Provincial Governments to the placing of the rules made by them with regard to their security prisoners in the Council Library ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : (a) and (b) after due consideration, the Government of India have come to the conclusion that it would not be appropriate to place in the Library of the Central Legislature copies of the Rules and Orders made by Provincial Governments.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : What is the objection to placing the rules of those Governments in the Council Library which do not treat them as confidential.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : Government feel, Sir, that it is doubtfully appropriate for them to place in the Library of the Central Legislature rules made by Provincial Governments. Moreover in so far as in present circumstances some Provincial Governments treat their rules as confidential and others allow publication, the Government of India feel it would be still more inappropriate to place the rules of one set of Provinces in the Library of the House and not of all of them.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Why should Members of the Legislature, because of the refusal of certain Governments to publish the rules made by them in regard to security prisoners, be denied an opportunity of knowing the rules made by the other Governments which have made them public or which at any rate do not treat them as secret.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : I have explained the reason for that, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : What are the considerations which made the Government of India think that they should not allow us to know even the rules of those Provinces which have no objection to their being published.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : It is not a question of the Government of India not allowing Honourable Members to know. It is a question of placing in the Library of the House rules made by Provincial Governments.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : How else are we to know those rules unless a copy is placed in the Library of the House.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : I will leave that to the Honourable Member. If they are published, I presume they are obtainable in the Province.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : The Government of India have placed a copy of the rules relating to security prisoners in the Library but I understand that they are not available on sale. There may be a similar practice in the Provinces. How can we get them unless copies are placed in our Library ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : I would suggest that the Honourable Member should address the Provincial Government concerned.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Why should we address the Provincial Governments when the rules under which the Provincial Governments are arresting persons and making orders for their detention have been made by the Government of India. Why should any Member of the House be asked to approach any other Government in order to obtain information on a question of public importance which concerns the whole of India.

(No answer.)

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The debate will now be resumed on the Food Motion. But before the debate begins I must point out to the House that yesterday and today several Honourable Members of this House came to see me and complained that the time available will not permit me to give them an opportunity of speaking. They said it would not be fair on my part not to allow them to speak on an important occasion like this. I quite agreed with them. I think the Honourable Members from Assam and Bengal have certainly a preferential right to speak on the Motion than any other Honourable Member. At the same time I am of opinion that this debate should not be monopolised by a few leading Members of the House but that I should give a fair opportunity to every Member to speak. I have, therefore finally decided most reluctantly to introduce for today a time limit of 15 minutes for each Honourable Member. I do so with considerable hesitation as I have allowed some Honourable Members yesterday to speak at length, but I find that I have no alternative but to submit to the desire of other Honourable Members in all fairness.

Another matter which I want to point out is this. Today is the last day. As far as I am concerned, I am prepared to sit till 6 O'Clock or even later if the Council wishes. I shall give every Honourable Member an opportunity of speaking on this motion. This motion will be debated again on Tuesday but we shall have very little time on that day because I understand that 4 Members of the Government of India desire to speak on that day and each of them will be entitled to speak for half an hour at least. As regards the Honourable Mr. Sen, who bears the burden of this motion, I shall have to give him at least an hour to answer all the questions raised as he was present throughout this debate. He will have to be given an opportunity of answering all questions on behalf of Government. I hope that Honourable Members will help me in order that the debate may be completed in time, I request that there should be no interruptions when Honourable Members are speaking in order to save time.

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER (Bombay Chamber of Comerce): Mr. President, Sir, the Honourable Mr. Sapru reminded me the other day that it was the European Group in the Central Legislature who first urged upon Government the importance of being prepared to meet the shortage of food, which it seemed might occur. In particular we asked Government to have one Minister in charge of Food policy, and nothing else. This was many moons ago. I do not suggest that either recrimination or criticism, unless it is of a constructive kind, is of much value at this stage. I feel that the Central Government has missed a great opportunity of demonstrating the utility of rationing by not instituting a scheme in Delhi Province. They should there have given an example of how rationing should be applied in a land of plenty. It would, I think, have been of great advantage to the Members of the Central Legislature to have had the opportunity of seeing rationing being carried out in Delhi.

Unfortunately the Food problem is not only a short term problem, it is a long term problem, with which we are likely to be faced for a considerable number of years after the war. It is not only a long term problem, but it is a world wide problem. Theoretically at any rate, a country such as India with a comparatively small percentage of deficit should not have to rely on other countries for food, certainly not for grain. Either by increasing production, or decreasing consumption, it is our duty to balance our account. As it is necessary to plan for years ahead, it is by no means too late for Government to introduce rationing in Delhi as an example, and I hope that they will do so, and that those of us who are here in the next Budget Session, will be able to get some idea of its working. Those of us who come from Bombay, have had the good fortune to see a rationing system which has been a great success.

It is useless to expect that life in circumstances which make rationing necessary, can be as pleasant as normally it would be in ordinary circumstances. Such disadvantages as there are in Bombay under the rationing system are very small compared with the serious state of affairs in some other parts of the country where no rationing has been introduced. We have every reason to be extremely grateful to Sir Roger Lumley, the *ex*-Governor of Bombay, Mr. H. F. Knight his Adviser, and

Mr. Gorawala, the Secretary concerned, for the production and the application of a plan which has undoubtedly saved Bombay, a deficit Province, from a very serious catastrophe.

I would like to take this opportunity of making a short personal explanation. I have been referred to both in the Press and in another place, as an honest Briton who has confessed to the crime of hoarding. I plead guilty to the accusation of honesty, but not to the crime of hoarding.

The kind of hoarding to which I made reference in this House when we last discussed this subject, was the very necessary and proper organization of food supplies for employees. My reason for mentioning it in connection with hoarding was that the mere fact that employers did as I did and bought, say, a month's supply for some thousands of people in advance, gave the impression that large amounts were being bought, larger amounts than would normally be taken off the market in big quantities, but in the result, this did not lead to any greater consumption or to any loss of supplies for other persons; in fact it merely brought about a more economic and satisfactory basis of supplies for the workers, than could otherwise have existed. Generally speaking, it made it possible for employees to obtain better food at lower prices, and the waste of time which would otherwise have occurred in obtaining their supplies, was eliminated. The pity is that Government failed to do for the people generally what certain employers did do for their employees.

All of us can help a little in reducing consumption—Indians, by reducing the amount of foodgrains which they consume, and Europeans, by omitting rice in particular, from their menus altogether.

There is one recommendation which I made on a previous occasion, and which I would like to repeat now. I draw the attention of Government to the dual advantages of the system followed in England, of Government bearing a part of the cost of food supplies out of public revenues. I am sorry that this has not been done more in India. It is a system which goes a long way to deal with two of the more serious problems of the present war, *viz.*, the high cost of living, more especially for the poor, and the danger of inflation. Bengal's duty to keep price to public down. I think this is one of the main defects of the Bengal organisation. I think that if the Bengal Government had done as I say they ought to have done, gone into the market and obtained supplies and if necessary sold them at a loss to make sure that even the poorest man could get his ration at a reasonable price, we would not have had these tragic events in Bengal.

Another thing which I have mentioned in the past and which I want to mention again because it does not seem to have received proper attention is the infliction of really considerable penalties on those who offend in these matters. I think that if necessary there ought to be minimum penalties laid down in Ordinances and those ought to be applied.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS (Nominated Non-Official): Confiscation would have been better.

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER: That may be one of them. I think we have every reason to feel great confidence in the immediate future. We have a Food Member. He is dealing with the Gregory Committee Report which has led him to many good conclusions. I think one of the great things he has done is the freezing of the grain which was pledged to banks. I think that is a most important thing. Then we have the military aid. I think between these we may look forward to a very much better future.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT (to the Honourable Mr. R. H. Parker): Will you speak also on your amendment? You may not have another opportunity of speaking.

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. H. PARKER: Sir, I think that my amendment speaks for itself. We do want an enquiry; we want a really first class enquiry. But we are very anxious that nothing should be done to interfere with Government's work in connection with the present immediate situation.

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMAR SANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY (East Bengal: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, the statement made by the Honourable Mr. B. R. Sen has lucidly placed before us the activities of the Central Government, but what we learn from it is that the Central Government has been consulting the Provincial

[Mr. Kumarsankar Ray Chaudhury.]

Government from time to time and issuing various instructions which could not be carried out fully and had to be withdrawn or altered very frequently. The Provincial Government of Bengal also had from time to time been issuing various controlling orders about rationing, fixing of price and for punishing those who violated them, but both of them did hardly do anything to relieve actual distress. They were on the contrary engaged in trying to throw the blame upon one another alleging corruption and profiteering. There was hardly any co-ordination amongst the members of the Government of India themselves. While the Member in charge of Agriculture was welcoming with joy the continued rise of prices of the food crops as it tended to put more money into the hands of the poor agriculturists, his colleague of the Food Department has been by his vacillating policy from time to time forcing the cultivator to sell at lower prices and enabling profiteers and the Central and Local Governments to make profit out of it. One instance of such a case has been given by my Honourable friend Mr. Sri Narain Mahtha and I will give another. The Bengal Government by raising a false cry of hoarding went about on a searching campaign through the villages which compelled what little stocks the villagers had to be sold away for lower price for the profiteer's benefit. When matters took a serious turn the Central Government could only scrape something from the provinces and send them to the famine areas. But this was not much till His Excellency Lord Wavell unlike his predecessor went to the locality and arranged for some supply from outside India and from the military store, and for facility of transport so long almost monopolised by the Army. We do not as yet know what will be the amount of help received from these sources, but under the exigency of war, I am afraid, we cannot expect it to be sufficient to enable as to tide over the critical time before us specially considering the unsympathetic attitude of Mr. Amery towards granting enough shipping facilities for carrying food grains to India. Although ships are employed freely for carrying goods to war zones and territories occupied by friendly neutrals for civil purposes they can not be diverted to bring food for the famished people of India whose resources have been depleted to supply the needs of those countries and war requirements. And even when the people of India are dying for want of food, they must still supply the needs of Persia and other neutral Countries setting on the fence. They must also contribute towards the expenses of the global war which, so far as we are concerned, is I am afraid to think not meant to be confined to this terrestrial globe, but extends to other globes where we are fast proceeding through starvation and death.

I now come to the causes of all this misery that has befallen India. The immediate causes no doubt are the several floods, cyclones and failure of rains the effects of which have hitherto been sought to be minimised by the Government, by the suppression of all news of distress prevailing in the town for fear of the real cause being exposed. It is the persistent drainage of the resources of India under an unsympathetic foreign rule highly aggravated by the exigencies of the war. While every belligerent country looked after and arranged for the needs of their civil population, India did nothing beyond starting a food department and passing it from one hand to another. There was no genuine intention behind it to look to the needs of the civil population and when distress appeared Government officials in the mofussil openly declared that as the people had non-co-operated they had no right to look to Government for help. Even now Mr. Amery advances over population as one of the causes of the famine and his subordinates take up the cue and state that some people must need die to relieve the acuteness of the situation. War means and involves the use of dictatorial powers and when war was declared by the Government of India against the will of her people congress foresaid what was coming, *viz.*, that foreign dictatorship in its state of unpreparedness for the war would sap the resources of India and drain her dry as hay.

We have received thanks from all quarters for all we have done, and are receiving offers of help from them for which we also are very thankful, but Mr. Amery says he is not in a proper position to utilise these helps very much for want of shipping although there was no dearth of shipping when help to other countries was rendered by India and although the submarine menace has almost disappeared now because the succour of India is not a war measure although the enemy is at the gate of India's eastern frontier where distress is very acute.

Well the Congress shook off their hands of all responsibility. But as happens in all countries beset with ill luck men are available to fill gaps. The Muslims as the favourite wives remained fondly attached and the Hindu Mahasabha as the discarded wife was zealous and afraid of retiring from the field, the Liberals remained as helpless onlookers, but one by one disillusionment is coming to them. Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee could not tolerate the dictatorship of the Bengal Governor and resigned when distress due to Contai flood was sought to be minimised and suppressed. Alla Bux and Fazlul Huq were chucked off because they were offering obstacles to the policy of divide and rule by seeking Hindu co-operation.

To the Muslim League Ministry set up to advance the claim of British Pakistan now falls the ignominy of establishing the failure of provincial autonomy and the Suhrawardys must soon share their fate as they try to lay the blame of what they are doing upon the heads of the Government and the permanent officials of whom they are the subservient slaves. I now come to the remedies, I think should be adopted. They are :—

(1) All profiteering should be stopped not only of the traders, but of the Governments both Central and Provincial as well.

(*a*) The producers should be allowed to retain as much of their yield as is reasonably necessary for all sorts of their needs and get a decent price for the balances.

(*b*) Traders acting under license from Government both wholesale and retail must get the least possible total amount of profit on the price paid to the producer and sell to the actual consumer at such profit only.

(*c*) Trade to be controlled by local licensing officers aided by local public committees who should see that food products sufficient for the local non-producing and consuming public should be retained in the locality before being sent outside. These committees should act from below upwards and be under the control of the provincial governments acting in consultation with a provincial committee of public men so as to enlist public sympathy and confidence. The Government of India should also with the help of a public committee exercise control and supervision over this provincial organisation and effect co-ordination between different provinces and controlling them using the Income-tax staff if necessary for the purpose.

2. (*a*) Import of food from outside should be immediately secured by trying to treat it as a war measure.

(*b*) By asking British Government to absolve India from making Contributions to the war food supply and to the supply of food to other countries till condition in India improves.

3. All industrial centres without distinction of race or religion should be the concern of the Central Government and their food supply should be arranged as a war measure as they are mostly manufacturing war materials and be charged to the revenues of India only so far as they serve Indian needs.

4. Enforcing a strict control of price by preventing as much as possible competitive buying in the open market at exorbitant prices as they have up to now allowed.

I have repeatedly asked that famine relief should be a central subject as it is beyond the resources of the provinces affected and involves not only immediate relief but a long standing obligation of rehabilitation and help beyond the powers and resources of the province concerned. I am glad that the food member has taken upon himself the responsibility for it. But the programme of work chalked out by him is one of mere co-ordination leaving the responsibility upon the provinces and I am afraid now for he will obtain the co-ordination of the other members of the Government of India.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL (Bombay : Non-Muhammadan): Dr. Akroyd addressing the Food Conference at Bombay has said that India has never been self-sufficient in its requirements of foodgrains and nearly 30 per cent. of the population of India has not been able to satisfy its calory requirements. According to the President of Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, the second city of the British Empire today is the haunting ground of thousands of half naked and hungry people most of whom have come from the mofussil in search of food and shelter to the City of Palaces. The grim tragedy that faces Bengal has shown no signs of abatement as can be seen from the relief measures taken which do not appear to be efficacious. The gravity of this unprecedented misery of the people of India, unknown in history for a long time, has been broadcast and known all the world over by now. It should be noted that ever since the famine started in Bengal almost all the Provinces did everything possible to send help in coin and in kind, yet it is strange that the Bengal Government has not been able to give so far any satisfactory explanation regarding the foodstuffs that it has received from the other Provinces. At every stage the Bengal Government has allowed such an increasing rate of processing charge as would stagger even the most hardened profiteer. The Bengal Ministry actuated by communal partisanship has steadily deteriorated the food situation and the Government of India are equally responsible for not having an adequate check on them and for its thoughtless emphasis on military and other requirements in India and abroad and its failure in properly co-ordinating its plans and activities so as to protect the legitimate interests of the people at large. Government's haphazard policy regarding price control, lack of uniformity in the rationing system, delay in introducing rationing in the rural areas, are largely responsible in my opinion, for this chaos and confusion.

The only possible short term method of relieving the distress is by importation and by equitable distribution.

The Gregory Committee has recommended, the importation of 1½ million tons of foodstuffs in the first year and 1 million tons annually for the succeeding years, Now, Sir, taking the present exigencies in this country into consideration, for instance, the influx of refugees, Axis prisoners, the imminence of an attack on Burma, prudential hoarding, panicky buying, into consideration I do not think that the quantity suggested by the Gregory Committee of 1½ million tons is sufficient for a population of 400 million. Besides, taking, as I say, into consideration the imminent attack on Burma and the necessary shortage of shipping space, I fear the total amount of 1½ million tons will not be arriving in the course of the year. However, the present position is that we have only received 45,000 tons of wheat out of which we have given Bengal 35,000 tons. Now, what is left over ? I must warn Government that the position in Bombay is far from happy, Bombay is not yet out of danger, and if Government do not keep sufficient reserves for the other deficit provinces, what has been the position in Bengal today will be our position tomorrow.

12 NOON.

I demand immediate formulation of a scheme for collection and distribution of foodgrains from local and outside resources, which will minimise delay in sending out foodgrains to the main receiving centres, which, in their turn, must, according to a careful planning, re-distribute to sub-centres within their jurisdiction, thus covering as quickly as possible the affected areas throughout the province. In Bengal itself I would suggest that there should be no transport of foodgrains from the districts to the city of Calcutta. Even now we hear reports of Government agents buying in the districts, which gives the price a sharp rise suddenly in those districts. The maximum possible help should be given from Army resources by way of temporary relief.

As regards long-term planning, an intense and sustained effort should be maintained to increase production in the country itself. The grow more food campaign has practically fizzled out. Dr. Akroyd has himself said that much energy has been wasted on this campaign, and unless we have something in the form of a large land army with modern equipment, nothing useful can be done. I would recommend the giving of subsidies to agricultural producers on a large scale as in the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Mr. President, this country today is passing through a great calamity, but the vicious spiral of statements and counter-statements seems to be going on the debacle of the food situation. I only hope we would stop making long political speeches now. Great issues are not settled by party caucuses, but by a spirit of mutual co-operation of the peoples of a great country. Let us therefore forget the causes of the debacle of the food situation and work in a spirit of co-operation, in a union of hearts, so that we may bring immediate relief to the poor, the suffering poor the afflicted and the hungry.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, I shall give you one promise, and that is that I shall try to be as brief as I can, because the fault lay yesterday with our side and we occupied a very great deal of time.

Sir, the Honourable Mr. Sen has stated in a lucid manner the history of the food crisis in Bengal and the steps that the Central Government have taken to avert the crisis. He has referred to the opposition which the Central Government had had to meet with from the provinces in the various food conferences which the Central Government have held, as a reason why the Central Government cannot be held responsible principally for the food crisis in India. Mr. Sen's point was that the Central Government had been as careful as it could be, and that it was not in the main responsible for the disaster. Now, if you analyse his statement, what does it come to ? It comes to this. In anticipation of the crisis the Central Government convened a number of conferences and put forward a number of good, academically sound suggestions which, if adopted, would have averted the crisis. The Central Government's defence is that the estimate of the situation that they had was correct and the remedies they had in mind were the right remedies. Their case is that the policies they had in view could only have been put into operation with the goodwill of the provinces.

But may I suggest in all humility that this defence leaves the central question unanswered ? That central question is that from the first day it was clear that the provinces had their own views, that they were failing to implement the policies advocated by the Central Government. What did this Government then do to see that its policies were executed ? Did the Central Government approach the Governor General and ask him to exercise his special powers and enforce a common policy on the provinces ? Did the Central Government approach the Secretary of State and ask for his intervention to see that a common policy was enforced upon the country ? They knew that they were playing with the lives of His Majesty's subjects. They knew that a great disaster would occur if their policies were not implemented. They owed it as agents of His Majesty's Government to take a firm line and say : " This is what we have been pleading with the provinces. They do not listen to us. Please enforce a common policy upon the provinces. " If the Secretary of State or His Majesty's Government or the Viceroy had under those circumstances said : " We cannot help you. Provincial Autonomy has to be respected, even though that Provincial Autonomy is qualified by many reservations and safeguards "—if the Secretary of State or the Viceroy had taken that line, then, so far as the Members of the Executive Council are concerned, they could have said : " We have done our best. Only we cannot give up our jobs because we want to stick to them. But we have done the best we could and we have failed with the Secretary of State. " That is not the line the Central Government can take now. Therefore, whatever may be the criticisms that one may have to utter against the Bengal Government, whatever may be the criticisms that one may have to make against His Majesty's Government, one cannot get away from the fact that the Central Government and the Indian Members of the Central Government, paid servants of His Majesty's Government, failed in their duty to inform His Majesty's Government of the real state of affairs—a state of affairs which they say they knew well in advance of the provinces. I think they have ill-served His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government have a very gerat deal to account for, but the man on the spot has also to account for a very great deal. To expect that men who are not in touch with popular opinion will ever take the course of resigning if their views are not followed is to expect the impossible. Therefore, as I have no particular respect for the Central Government, I do not take that line.

[Mr. P. N. Sapru.]

I will now come to another point. What was the state in which India entered this war? It has been rightly said by the Honourable Mr. Dalal that we were a self-sufficient country only in the sense that a large number of people were living on the margin of subsistence. So far as the population business is concerned, it was a well known fact. It was not a new fact. For the last 30 years the population of India had been increasing. The Government did little to develop production during all these years. According to Dr. Akroyd, as was pointed out by the Honourable Mr. Dalal, 30 per cent. of the population lives on the margin of subsistence. The war started in 1939. The Food Department in England was created in 1936. Burma was attacked on the 7th December, 1941. The Food Department here did not have a separate Secretary until December, 1942. The Commerce Member was given charge of it on 3rd May, 1943. In February Mr. Sarkar resigned and then Mr. Aziz-ul-Huque took charge and he then made it over to Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava in August, 1943. Why could not Government have anticipated that the international situation was deteriorating? They knew that appeasement had failed with Germany. Why did they think that Japan would not enter the war at any stage? Why were not precautionary measures taken before Japan entered into the war? Why were not measures taken after the entry of Japan to survey the food situation to arrive at a coherent policy and force that coherent policy and see that the "Grow More Food" campaign was made a success? I have been going through the Report of the Gregory Committee. It says in effect that the "Grow More Food" campaign cannot be a success unless you have fertilisers and agricultural implements. What did the Government of India do to get these fertilisers in all these years of war? The Bengal famine occurred in July or August 1943. The war started in 1939. What were you doing all these years? The fact of the matter is that you never recognised your responsibility of feeding the civil population. The theory that was advanced was that there must be under-consumption as if there was over-consumption in this country. People were suffering from malnutrition and you wanted to use the machinery of price control for seeing that there was under-consumption in a country in which 30 per cent. of the people were suffering from malnutrition. While currency was expanded no effort was made to see that the quantity of goods in circulation for civilian consumption was also increased. Therefore, it is no use saying that the whole responsibility is with the Bengal Government. I was rather surprised yesterday at a remark which the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam, practised parliamentarian that he is, made in defence of the Honourable Mr. Suhrawardy. The Honourable Mr. Suhrawardy said as a matter of fact in May, June or July—I am not sure about the date and I will not look into the notes to find the exact date now—that the situation in Bengal was quite hopeful. He said something to that effect. The Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam said that he had said it under the orders of the Food Department. A Minister of the Crown in a Provincial Government taking his orders from the Food Department! I say that man and the party which supports him do not deserve to be taken seriously into consideration. It is a most contemptible act for a Minister of the Crown to take shelter behind the plea that he was acting under superior orders. I can understand my Honourable friend Mr. Sen, who is a permanent servant, who is not drawn from public life, making a statement like that. But I cannot understand a man posing as a Leader of the Muslim League taking shelter behind the plea, "I said this because I was ordered to say this." If he was ordered to say this, the obvious remedy was to resign and make known the facts to the public.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan) : They were made known. It is published in the papers of Delhi.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : They clung to office all the same. If I am a critic of Mr. Suhrawardy, let me say that I propose to be equally strong in my criticism of Mr. Fazlul Huq. Mr. Fazlul Huq says, "I told the Governor of Bengal not to remove these foodstuffs from Bengal and not to use them for army purposes, because I was anticipating all this trouble." It is all right for Mr. Fazlul Huq to say this after having submitted to the coercive action of Sir John Herbert to resign the office of Minister. It did not occur to him to take the simple line of saying, "Here is the Governor doing this sort of thing with me. I am not going to tolerate this sort of thing. I wash my hands off—if I may use a vulgar expression—the Bengal Ministry. I am publishing what Sir John Herbert has been doing."

The whole story is one of muddle, of bungling, of a desire to stick to office on the part of every one concerned in this business. I see very little patriotism in the activities either of the old Bengal Ministry or of the present Bengal Ministry which thinks that by sticking to office it will somehow be able to induce the British Government to concede the Muslim League demands in a reasonable way. These people are not a self-reliant people. The people of the Muslim League are not people to be relied upon to—.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I present to you this newspaper.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : I will not read this newspaper and I will throw it there.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Slavery is because of this attitude of mind.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : I am mentioning all this to suggest that it is not speeches which makes an organisation respected ; it is action which makes an organisation respected and I suggest in all seriousness that there is much bluff in the politics of my Honourable friend's organisation. There is little capacity for real organisation or sacrifice and those are the things that matter in the life of every community.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Even bluff is wanting in Liberal organisation.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Believe me, I am not communal. Few people would go further than I would in making an honest and real attempt at communal harmony. But I want to face facts as they are and I have no patience with time-servers and with people who think that by supporting this Imperialism or that Imperialism they can achieve independence either for India or for a part of India.

A point which I must emphasise is that for a considerable period the Food Department was under the control of the Viceroy and I think I can say this, that it is a strange commentary upon a Viceroy who came out with this flourish of trumpet that he is going to do something for the agricultural people that he did not even care to visit Bengal ; he did not start a relief fund for the suffering people of Bengal. I suppose the desire was that the thing should be done by Lord Wavell. I do not think that Lord Linlithgow could be so inhuman as not to visit Bengal, because it did not matter to him what happened to the people of Bengal. I suppose the desire was that this successor might get credit for having done what he did not do, because on the political side there is not much to be expected. So far as the causes are concerned, it has been suggested that inflation is the principal cause. Mr. Amery now admits that inflation is a contributory cause. But this inflation does not explain the situation in regard to Bengal. There must be some local causes also in Bengal and the local causes in Bengal are, apart from natural disasters like cyclones, that you have got there a strategic province ; you have got huge armies there, foreign armies there ; you have got a large number of evacuees there ; you have got big congregations of labour in Calcutta and other parts. And when these men purchase in the market huge stocks they are the hoarders and the civilian population must suffer. As a matter of fact purchases were made from the districts and removed to Calcutta with the result that the rural population had to suffer. Therefore the real hoarders are the Government departments. The real reason is the great wastage in army. Food is bought and then it is condemned and it is bought again and this process goes on. The real hoarders are the Government departments, the military departments and the big employers of labour, British and Indian ; and it is small wonder that the cultivator is in a bad plight today. I think it is monstrous to suggest that the cultivator who just ekes out an existence is hoarding food. But even if he were, in a period of rising prices, on account of the policy you have followed, it would be quite natural for him to do so. He is not certain of the morrow. There is no metallic basis for your currency and if he were to hoard a little, I think it would be only human. But I think it is monstrous to suggest that any blame attaches to the Indian cultivator.

Now, Sir, I will just say one thing more. Defence, foreign policy, export and

[Mr. P. N. Sapru.]

import trade, transport, looking after of evacuees, feeding of armies, currency, these are important and vital subjects. They belong to the centre and therefore the centre's responsibility is very very great. Whatever the Provincial Government may have done or may not have done, the centre cannot escape responsibility, because we are not dealing with a country which is completely federal; we are dealing with a country which is quasi-federal and we are dealing with a country in which the Central Government has got vast powers, powers which determine the nation's life.

I would just like to say a word about the *aman* crop. So far as the *aman* crop is concerned——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: That is not a new point.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: I have got a new suggestion. I am told, Sir, that we are going to have about 10 million tons. I would say that the past should be a guide to you. Do not allow the crop to vanish and the watchword of the Government should be: we shall control the crop. It is not essential for you to purchase the entire crop. I would suggest that you should divide Bengal into four productive zones on the basis of rice from an administrative point of view and invite tenders from traders for these zones for the purchase of crops in these zones. The traders should first be asked to give an estimate of the yield of the crop in the zone, then Government should fix the value per ton for the purchase price to be paid to the cultivator. The contractors should be the monopolist purchaser of all crop at the price fixed. The contractor should sell it to local retailers after making good his overhead charges. Government should issue coupons to every consumer, both in rural and urban areas. I would go further in the direction of rationing than some of my friends. I say in Bengal in order to tide over a temporary crisis, have rationing in rural areas also because distress there is very great. 50,000 people are dying there. According to the *Times of India* a million Harijans have died——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You cannot continue.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Now, Sir, I shall wind up by saying that this is my concrete suggestion. So far as co-operation is concerned that depends upon a number of factors.

THE HONOURABLE COL. SIR HISSAMUDDIN BAHADUR (Nominated Non-Official): Mr. President, Sir, I have listened with keen interest to the most lucid and illuminating speech of Honourable Mr. B.R. Sen, Director General of Food, giving a vivid picture of the steps already taken and proposed to be taken by the Government of India, to solve the Food problem; and also the points of view raised by different Honourable Members on this most vital and grave question, *i.e.*, the Food crisis which seriously faces certain parts of India—Bengal in particular and Travancore, Cochin, Vizagapatam, Orissa and Sind in general. I must confess that whereas the steps enumerated by the Government are praiseworthy, the Food Debate has presented the expected interest, keenness and combined efforts of different brains for the solution of the common problem. The agony of hunger and distress of the people, children and womenfolk, is really beyond toleration. The loss of life, particularly in Bengal, has been appalling. The harrowing details of poverty and sufferings appearing in the papers have been heart-rending.

I am sorry to say that some of the politicians have been busy in making the capital of politics out of it, instead of keeping up the public morale and co-operation which are most essential to solve the problem. Whereas the Economists have been devising their own theories; the Government have been doing their duty in tackling it, the affected ones have either starvation, death or lingering on. Conferences have been held. Meetings have been addressed. Funds have been raised. Different Associations have planned their own plans and worked in their own ways. But in spite of all human energies, efforts and organization, the vexed question still stares us in the face. The authorities have been active and vigilent but still there is room for further efforts and improvements; and the Government has yet to tell us what further steps they intend taking to mitigate the sufferings and put a stop to this state of affairs.

The prompt action taken by His Excellency Viscount Lord Wavell, immediately after the assumption of his high office of Viceroyalty, in personally visiting Bengal and

sympathetically touring the affected areas has greatly touched the feelings of the people of India. The Military under the inspiring leadership of our talented hero Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Claude Auchinleck, who has taken personal keen interest, has been most helpful. The Military has rendered most valuable help indeed. They have their own quota, with legitimate reserves, and the present shortage is not at all attributable to the Army.

The appointment of Major General Wakely, who is a genuine and sympathetic friend of Indians, and whom I have the pleasure of knowing since many many years in the N.-W. F. P., to control the transportation arrangements for distribution of food grains in collaboration with the Civil Administration, is a very happy choice. I am confident that he will do his very best in every possible way. The measures taken by the Government are commendable indeed. But if at all criticism is to be levelled, it should be in the spirit of constructive proposals to solve the knotty problem.

Now, Sir, I would like to turn to the real issue before this Honourable House and strongly commend to the Government of India some practicable proposals for their consideration and adoption, of course, with any modifications that may be deemed necessary to meet the situation according to prevalent circumstances.

My first and foremost submission is that the price of foodgrains should be controlled in all its aspects, keeping in view the interests of zamindars, who are the real tillers of the soil. The food grains should be accessible and within purchaseable reach of an ordinary man of common means. The price control and rationing system exercised in Bhopal State has worked marvellously well. If an everlasting arrangement on similar lines is not devised by the Food Department, on All India basis, I am afraid, the famine disease may spread all over India, and victimise the other Provinces likewise.

I must say, and I think I am not wrong in saying so, that besides the hoarders, stock and retail dealers, there are lot of very big zamindars who have got hand also in raising and maintaining high prices of wheat in India. But their grouse, which to a certain extent is justified, is about the high prices they have to pay for essential commodities of daily life, which have gone up by 400 to 500 per cent. or even more. As such the need for controlling prices of essential commodities of life is imperative and should be so worked out and handled that it should not hit any particular class at the sacrifice of other. A percentage of profit should be fixed between the " high class business shops, manufacturers, stockists and direct importers " on the one hand and the " retail dealers " on the other, according to their over-head expenses, rents, establishments, etc., etc. Any infringement either by the seller in selling at higher or lower rates or by the buyer in buying as such, should be made severely punishable under the Defence of India Act. This, of course, is a Provincial affair and its workability and organization should be managed by the Provincial Governments, districtwise according to their respective prevalent conditions, but should be under the supreme co-ordination of the Central Government. The inspectors in the districts should check up the stocks to avoid black-marketing, but I leave the detailed steps to be taken to the Food Department. These steps should have been taken long ago and are already over-due but it is never too late. As for instance such steps have already been taken in the N.-W. F. P. with good results, under the guiding inspiration of H. E. Sir George Cunningham, Governor, N.-W. F. P.

I have had an opportunity recently of discussing the matter with a high Ministerialist of the Punjab and he was also of the opinion that if the prices of essential commodities are fixed and regularised carefully, based on fundamentals of economy, the price of wheat will naturally go down to the normal war time price level, in the immediate future.

Now, Sir, turning again to the availability of wheat, I have no doubt that sufficient quantities of grains are available, and will be available, with surplus, for the whole population of India ; and for the requirements of the Army—Army who are serving and sacrificing to protect their Motherland and keep the enemy long way off from her soils—if the Food Department in every Province will assess their yearly produce in food grains and the quantity required for annual consumption. The

[Col. Sir Hissamuddin Bahadur.]

surplus should be intimated to the Central Government, who should buy it for providing to the deficit areas. This is a simple logic and mathematics. No constitutional quibble should deter it. The whole problem can be solved if the distribution is regularised, simplified and equalised.

My second submission is that the big zamindars should also be nominated on the conferences and meetings to enable them to place their point of view, to safeguard their interests and offer solutions of the problems. As I have explained above, the zamindars are hard hit by the rising and fluctuating prices of commodities of daily requirements. The zamindars should be taken into confidence. His association in such matters will be of immense help towards the proposals to be implemented ; and the hoarding and black marketing would cease with his co-operation and intimate local knowledge. The zamindars should be given due representation on any enquiry committee which the Government may set up now or at any other time.

My third and vital submission and strong recommendation is that the Indian States, who have vast areas of land lying idle should be provided with tractors to encourage the " Grow More Food Campaign ". I am sure if this proposal is given effect to, in close collaboration with the Rulers of the States, it will considerably ease the situation. The Government should have the right of taking its produce direct from the State for Army purposes, etc.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS : Sir, it is no good now trying to have a post-mortem examination of the causes which have led to the present state of things. We must, I think, concentrate our attention upon what is to do in order to meet the situation. No doubt we have been saying for some time that India is a deficit country so far as food is concerned and we should get food from outside. But the Central Government was playing the game which was played even in the Garden of Eden. When Adam was asked why he ate the forbidden fruit, he threw the blame upon Eve. So, they have been saying that Provincial Autonomy is responsible for this, that and the other. Sir, it is not necessary now to go into all that. I would make a few suggestions for the purpose of increasing the quantity of food that would be available in India.

First of all, we must consider why there is shortage of food. Even Bengal, at least for a generation, had been importing 50,000 tons of rice from Burma, and Madras had been importing more than 140,000 tons of rice from Burma, and also getting about 50,000 tons of broken rice from Saigon. Well, all that has been stopped now. We have not only to feed our own people, but we have to feed a very large army, and also a number of refugees who have come from the East and from Burma, and also a large number of prisoners who are stationed in this country. Unless we make proper arrangements to feed all these people, the situation will grow from bad to worse.

One of the reasons for the rise in prices is the abnormal price paid by the military contractors for purchasing foodgrains. You go wherever you like, and whenever the contractor who supplies food to the military comes along, he is able to outbid you. I will give one instance. A few months ago, fuel shortage was keenly felt in Madras ; even now it is so. With great difficulty the people induced the railway authorities to allow about 20 wagons of firewood to come from the mofussil. When the train reached a place about eight miles from Madras, a military contractor comes along and says : " What is the price you are offered ? " " Eighteen rupees a ton " " I will offer you Rs. 25." And the whole of the 20 wagons were taken away by the military contractor, and the poor people of Madras had to suffer. What I would suggest is this. If the military want to buy grain and other foodstuffs and other commodities, ask the civil authorities to buy. Do not allow the military authorities to buy whatever they like. No doubt the Army has to be fed. The Army cannot be allowed to starve, because our very existence depends upon the well-being of the Army. But, at the same time, there is a way of doing it—not by buying at exorbitant prices and thereby raising the prices of foodstuffs and other things in the country. They talk of inflation. But inflation is only one of the reasons. The main reason is the exorbitant price paid by the military contractors. What is the good of blaming the producer ? The military contractor comes to him and offers a good price, and he accepts it.

I will give one instance which I heard only just before I left Madras. In Madras, the grow more food campaign was taken advantage of by some people in Kodaikanal for raising potatoes. They raised potatoes by buying seed potatoes from the Agricultural Department of the Madras Government at the rate of Rs. 4 or Rs. 4-8 a maund. After the crop had been raised, what did the Madras Government do ? They issued an order that the growers must sell the crop only to licensees. There are only three licensees in the whole of Kodaikanal, and the result was that the price went down to Rs. 1-8 and Rs. 1-12 a maund. Why should you compel people to sell only to these licensees. They are the profiteers. I wrote to the Madras Government—the Chief Secretary to the Madras Government—and said : " This is not proper. You are only helping the profiteers and the smugglers." In the neighbouring town of Madura, potatoes were selling at Rs. 4 and Rs. 4-8 a maund—the smugglers were selling at this rate. I got a very nice reply saying that my suggestions would receive the consideration of Government. I do not know what consideration they have received. I also heard, just before I left, that 50 tons—not maunds—of potatoes in Ootacamund were getting rotten because the contractors would not pay a decent price. This sort of thing ought to be stopped. You must have a co-ordinated arrangement by which all provinces can be properly managed. Each province should not be allowed to do what it likes. Potato is a perishable crop, and if the sort of thing that I have described is allowed to go on, a lot of waste will result. Therefore, what I say is that the Central Government ought to make proper rules for the guidance of the Provincial Governments. Each Provincial Government should not be allowed to do what it likes. No doubt, export and transport from one province to another can be regulated by the Central Government.

Next I come to the " Grow More Food " campaign. This is more or less only a propaganda business. Is it easy to grow more food by simply asking people to do it ? You are not a magician. By moving a wand you cannot raise more food. It takes a long time. If you want to raise more food, you must help the ryot as we call him, that is, the farmer. He must have first of all seed grain ; secondly, he must have plough bulls, and thirdly, he must bring virgin soil under cultivation. All this takes time. You cannot have food by simply saying " Grow More Food " or by giving money. I would suggest seriously, not light-mindedly, that the revenue authorities should cultivate food. Why should they not do it ? Instead of the Collectors, Sub-Collectors and the Tahsildars being confined to writing reports and sticking to red tape, burn all the files and make them engage the people in the villages to grow more food. Why should they not do it ? This is a war measure. This is not going to be done every day. This is not a matter with which we are concerned only for one year. If Col. Knox can be believed, he said that the war with Japan will go on till 1949, and then even as soon as the war is over, we are not going to have food immediately. You must proceed by planning for 7 or 8 years at least. What provision are you making now for that ? The Central Government has got one way of getting over all the difficulties. They say " Import an expert". Will that bring more food ? It is suggested that you must have a Royal Commission to examine who was at fault. Supposing you appoint a Royal Commission. It will take three years to make a report. As you know, Sir, it is said in England that if you want to shelve a subject, appoint a Royal Commission. Suppose you appoint a Royal Commission and it comes to the finding that the Central Government is to blame or the Local Government is to blame or provincial autonomy is to blame or somebody else is to blame. Is it going to give you one lb. or one ounce of rice or paddy more than what is available now ? We are wasting our time by discussing a lot of things which are of no use. I want the Government to try its very best to raise as much food as possible, not by mere propaganda, not by merely saying " Grow more food ". Of course Punjab has got plenty of food and plenty of land and they are doing it. But I come from Madras where people feel keenly the necessity for food. Unfortunately there was a flood. Last year we had no rain owing to the failure of the north-east monsoon. This year we had so much rain that there was heavy flood in Madras. Would you believe it, Sir, that in the streets of Madras, in some places, water rose to a height of 8 feet. Things, people and cattle were washed away. That being so, people are suffering everywhere in Madras. Try to raise as much crop as possible. It is no use saying that somebody is to blame. This question is not going to be confined to one year or two years. Till 1949 at least,

[Sir David Devadoss.]

according to Col. Knox, the war with Japan will go on. Till we get back Burma and the Malay States we shall be in the same condition in which we are now. Therefore I suggest in all seriousness that the Central Government should take steps to see that more food is grown not only here but everywhere throughout the country. The question of providing against famine is not a new thing. Nearly 4,000 years ago, a big Emperor was faced with this problem. The Emperor sent for all his important Ministers and others but they could not give any advice. Then he sent for a young man who came and said, "Buy up all the grains that are available now and store them in various places. When the famine is on the land, then you can sell the grains to the people." By so doing he saved not only his country but also his neighbouring countries. They say there is going to be a very good crop in Bengal. I want Government to buy that crop directly, not through a third person or a licensee or a man who is likely to profiteer, not through agencies which would corner and then try to make money. But let all the lower officials, the tahsildars, revenue inspectors and karnams, *i.e.*, accountants, buy the grain and store it in the mofussil. The Honourable Mr. Sen said you must make the people feel confident. How can you make the people confident if you take away the grain from the mofussil to central places? Keep them where they are, and when the time comes, open the depots, sell the grain to the people. Make the people feel that they will thus be provided for. If that is done, this question of hoarding will not arise. Moreover, this hoarding is only a bogey trotted out by the Government which has failed to do its duty. So far as Madras is concerned, I say there is no hoarding at all. Where is the hoarding? Why don't you go and find out? Where are your C. I. D.'s and other police officers gone? Hoarding is not prevalent at all. No doubt in Madras the custom is for the landlord to pay the workman in kind. He has got to keep enough in order to pay his workmen not only during the harvest season but throughout the year. You cannot call that hoarding. Without that grain he cannot cultivate the land next year. There is no such thing as hoarding in Madras. One in 10,000 might hoard, but that is not generally done. This is merely a bogey which is trotted out by the Government. Forget all that. You acquire all the produce that is available, whether it be in Bengal or the N. W. F. P. or Madras, and store it in the places where the produce is bought, so that the people may have confidence. That is the only way of inducing confidence. Otherwise, the villager cannot be made to feel that he is safe and that he can get grain whenever he wants.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: What about the urban areas? How will you feed them?

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS: With regard to urban areas, those who have got plenty of money can buy as much as they like. My learned friend has only anticipated me. With regard to the military and other people, you must get from outside. As I said in the beginning, India is not able to support its own population. We have been importing large quantities of rice from Burma, Saigon and other places. These supplies must be obtained from outside, not only foodgrains but also meat and other things. They must come from outside. It is part of the war effort. The same thing will happen if you had this army in some other place, not in India. Won't you then send your foodgrains there? Therefore, the military people must be fed from outside. Government must make arrangements for that. The War Offices in England and the United States must make an effort to see that they send grain, food and other things to the army. We are likely to have a very big army here. We are going to attack Japan from here, and we must make provision for all that. Let the revenue authorities also try to raise some grain instead of simply saying "we will give you some money". You talk of takavi loans and agricultural loans. How much of that loan really reaches the ryot? Without feeding the revenue inspector and Karnam nothing can be done. How long does it take? First the karnam must report, then the revenue inspector—I am talking of Madras—then the Tahsildar, then the Divisional officer, then the Collector and then the matter goes to the Board of Revenue. I think Honourable friends from Madras will support me. How long does it take? In the meantime the ryot has to wait with his grain or with whatever he has in order to cultivate the land. It takes months and months. Meantime he is starving and the country

is starving. Make the Government officials raise grain. Then they will know what is the real difficulty in the way of raising grain. I am not saying this in a light-minded fashion. I know in Tinnevelly the name of Puckle is revered even today. He was Collector of Tinnevelly more than 70 or 80 years ago. There was an anicut or dam across one of our rivers and he wanted to construct channels on either side to take the water. Under the present circumstances with our Land Acquisition Act and so on it would take years. What did he do ? He went from village to village, called all the chief men, the owners of the land, and said " I want so much space for cutting my channel ; then I will give you water and give it at a fair rate." They all consented and within a few months the whole thing was over. He was able to construct miles and miles of channels very quickly. Why don't you do such things now ? There is red tape in everything and reports and reports and files and all these people are being snowed under files. They cannot get out of them. Being a war measure, you should do something which will really be useful to the people and not merely talk of this, that and the other. My submission is that the Government must make every effort to see that more grain is grown in this country.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I think this will be a convenient time to adjourn the House. When we meet after adjournment I will call upon Mr. Ali Asgar Khan to address the House and I request all the other Honourable Members who want to address the House to be present in the afternoon because I will give everyone an opportunity. The Council will now adjourn till Half past Two.

The Council then adjourned for Lunch till Half past Two of the Clock.

The Council re-assembled after Lunch at Half past Two of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

*THE HONOURABLE MAULVI ALI ASGAR KHAN (Assam : Muhammadan): Sir, the food situation of the country, especially of Bengal——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Please speak a little louder.

*THE HONOURABLE MAULVI ALI ASGAR KHAN :——has been discussed at full length and Government have been quite incompetent to tackle the situation. If they had a little foresight the situation would have been far better. In European countries where war is raging with full vigour people are not dying of starvation but here the condition is quite different. People are dying in thousands in Bengal every day. As soon as Burma was cut off Government should have made arrangements for supplying food to Bengal but they did not take immediate steps and sat quite idle and when famine broke out in the country Government became alert and are trying to make hasty arrangements to avert the danger. Even now we are looking forward on Burma, that we will get food when Burma will be reconquered and till then let our people die, when we can make up this deficit later on. Government are spending money but they could not discharge their duty to the population. If this situation had taken place in any other European country they would have had to vacate their office immediately and face a public trial. I asked questions about the figure of the death roll from starvation in Bengal but the Government could not give the said figure and this shows that they have not got any record of the death roll. If so many thousands of people have died in Calcutta city; the figure of death in the countryside would be very high. In my estimation death roll has approached nearly a million now in Bengal. To meet the present situation Government are sending foodgrains to Bengal from different Provinces and they have imported the same from the foreign countries. The Government are pinning their hope on the *aman* crop that this will to a great extent relieve the present distress in the country but all these are makeshifts and temporary arrangements. Government have not up till now taken any steps to remove the present deficit of about 1,750,000 tons permanently and unless that is done the same thing may happen over again.

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Maulvi Ali Asghar Khan.]

Sir, I put a question about the forest areas being made available for cultivation, but the Honourable Member in charge of Land said that forest is a national asset and if the same is devastated there will be changes in climate and the natural drainage of the country will be dislocated to the great disadvantage of the public, and thus discouraged the proposal. The Honourable Member has not yet visited my Province. I would ask him to make a tour of Assam and see for himself the vast area of cultivable land lying fallow there. I have repeatedly brought before this House the proposal of settlement of land in my Province. There are more than 2 million acres of land lying there which could easily be given for settlement. This would bring a land tax to the amount of Rs. 1¼ million to the coffers of the Assam Government——

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: How much?

*THE HONOURABLE MAULVI ALI ASGAR KHAN: 1¼ million of rupees.

—and landless and homeless people will settle down to cultivate this area. If there is an outturn of 1 ton of rice per acre there would be 1 million tons of rice available from this area and the present deficit will be nearly covered. But if this proposal were put to the Government they would say it is a provincial matter of the Assam Government, but when the Government of India is faced with a difficult problem such as the food problem will they not ask the Assam Government to settle this vast area so that this all India food problem is solved to our best advantge? Perhaps Government have never thought on this line before. I cannot understand such negligence when people are dying for food. I would therefore ask the Government to draw up a scheme and direct the Government of Assam to settle down this vast area as a result of which homeless starving people will get food and houses for themselves and the Assam Government would be benefited to the extent of 1¼ million of rupees as land revenue for their deficit province.

In the conclusion of my speech I must say, Sir, that our Government does not at all care what happens to our people, whether they live or die.

With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH (United Provinces Central: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, some Honourable Members have already spoken on this subject, and many will undoubtedly speak on it with greater authority, and so I shall be very brief in my remarks. The food problem is an emergent problem, and calls for immediate solution. The situation in the country is fast deteriorating, specially in Bengal where the climax has been reached, and the people are suffering for want of food and dying of starvation. The opening of the Food Department had greatly raised the expectancy of the people, and they looked up to it for planning some satisfactory solution of this economic problem. But popular expectation has, I regret to say, been dashed to the ground, and there is suffering and distress throughout the country more or less. Next to Bengal, the situation in Bihar is also serious, and these are the two Provinces in the Eastern Zone, which lie next to the war front. Burma rice has ceased to come; Australian wheat which was imported into India, has also stopped due to war, and cultivation of foodgrains in this country has been adversely affected by various factors, such as the dearth of bullock, agricultural implements, and scarcity of labour in many areas. The presence of American and British troops in this country had led to an increase in the slaughter of cows and bullocks, and also an increased consumption of foodgrains; and this has its natural repercussion on the economic situation. As one who spends most of his time in rural areas, I am somewhat intimately acquainted with the condition of the agriculturists, at least in my own Zamindari. I understand that wheat from Australia and elsewhere has recently been imported, and this will undoubtedly relieve the situation. I suggest that a system of carefully planned rationing should be introduced at least for the poorer sections of the people, that purchase of stocks should be direct from the cultivators, thus eliminating the profit of the middleman, that no food should be allowed to be exported out of the country, and that hoarding and profiteering, wherever they may exist, should be put down with a firm hand. It is also worth considering whether it would not be profitable to associate, both in the centre and also in the Provinces, a certain number of carefully chosen and qualified non-official Indians, who may act through a Committee or a number of Committees, to keep in

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

touch with the provailing situation in the country, and collaborate with the Food Department, or whatever official machinery there may be in the Provinces to deal with this question. In the Province of Oudh, from which I come, agrarian situation, I admit, is not so desperate as, for instance, in Bengal; but unless appropriate steps are immediately taken, the position is bound to deteriorate, resulting in wide-spread suffering and distress. The economic position of the Taluqdars of Oudh, and I am one of them, has also been adversely affected, due to the prevailing food scarcity; and the future looks bleak and dreary. I am afraid the military requirements have been over-emphasized by the Government in the past, thus neglecting the necessary demands of the civil population.

Sir, I have noticed that a suggestion has often emanated from official sources that people should be encouraged to take more of fruit and vegetable, so as to lessen to some extent the pressure on food consumption. The suggestion is no doubt theoretically commendable, but I am afraid it will hardly lend itself to practical application. Where are fruit and vegetable in sufficient quantity for the people to take? They are also being taken at fancy prices for the military, and the civil population is being gradually deprived of them. It would not do for the official spokesmen merely to prick holes in non-official suggestions. They must come out with their plan of action, suited to the requirements of the situation. Any way, the situation must be speedily eased, and the supply of food to deficit Provinces must be regarded as a vital war measure. Sir, it has been truly remarked that a hungry man is an angry man, as hunger is a mischivous councillor. If the situation is allowed to deteriorate further, and food becomes more scarce, I will not be surprised if food riots break out fairly extensively in the land, resulting in lawlessness and disorder. Such a situation will have no political significance, of course, but the enonomic factor will be none-the-less alarming and embarrassing. Sir, we have to fight the war to a successful finish on the Eastern Zones with Japan, and the home front should be attended to the requirements of the situation. We have to adjust our internal position, and put it on a fairly satisfactory basis. Political questions might wait, but hunger brooks no delay. Sir, I must here pay a warm tribute of gratitude and admiration to His Excellency, Lord Wavell, who with a truly remarkable foresight, and gift of imagination, signalised the assumption of his Viceroyalty, by promptly paying a visit to Bengal to see things for himself, and having so speedily employed the vast resources of the Military—men and material—to the alleviation of human distress. This comes in refreshing contrast to the action, or rather the inaction of his predecessor, who did not think it worth while to study the situation on the spot, and to hearten the distracted people of that unhappy Province by his presence, and timely action. Sir, I must not omit to record my high sense of appreciation for the disinterested services of those relief agencies— non-official, as well as official—which have been unremitting in their exertions to bring food and succour to the hungry and the distressed. Our hearts go out in sympathy to our suffering brethren in Bengal; and I appeal to the Government—Central, and Provincial—to do all they can to relieve their dire distress, and prevent death, starvation and epidemics, which invariably follow, in the wake of famine and flood. Sir, forewarned is fore-armed; and I seriously ask the Government not to allow the economic situation in India to deteriorate; but to make provision for a sufficient stock of foodgrains in the country at a cheap rate as speedily as possible, so that the morale of the people may not be shattered in face of the grave military threat that over-hangs this country, for that way lie danger and frustration.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHOWDHURY (West Bengal: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, the Honourable Mr. Sen has said that the total deficit of foodgrains in Bengal this year was 1·3 million tons whereas there was a carry over from last year of roughly about one and a half million tons, besides there has been an import of foodgrains of about five hundred thousand tons. If his figures are correct then there must be something rotten in the provincial administration of Bengal. The Honourable Mr. Sen is himself a Bengalee and has been serving Bengal for more then 20 years. He knows the plight of the argriculturists of Bengal and knows very well that it is not possible or feasible for the agriculturists to hoard and hold up foodgrains for long. Besides there has been a food drive by the Government of Bengal throughout the province. The question is where have these food

[Mr. Susil Kumar Roy Chowdhury]

grains gone ? How have they disappeared ? We want the Government of India to find out that. However that may be, the fact remains that people in Bengal are dying of starvation not in thousands but tens of thousands. Mr. Sen has said that the Government of India became aware of the serious situation in Bengal early part of may this year whereas Sir Azizul Huq in his speech in the Assembly on Thursday last said that from January to June this year the monthly average mortality rate in Calcutta was less than the average of the preceding five years and it was difficult for him to believe at that time that a crisis was impending in Bengal. Well, Sir, that is a statement made by a member of the Government of India who held the portfolio of Food till the 10th of August of this year.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : When did he say that ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHOWDHURY : On Thursday last, in the Assembly. You will find it in the " Hindustan Times ".

According to him the economic condition of the people of Bengal are to be judged by the mortality rate in Calcutta. His statement also implied that the Government of Bengal at that time did not apprise the Government of India about the serious food situation in the province. Sir, to my mind this is nothing short of criminal negligence. Now Sir, that showboy of the Government of India Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar had the impudence to State in the other house, that he knew of one group of persons who brought about the present situation that was those who went about in the villages and told the agriculturists not to sell grains and not to accept currency notes. Now Sir, the clear meaning of that was that the agriculturists listened to the advice, hoarded the foodgrains instead of selling and were responsible for the famine condition in the country. Nobody but a person devoid of all common sense could make a suggestion like that.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Whom does the cap fit ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHOWDHURY : It does not matter whom the cap fits, but the implication is that the agriculturists did not sell their grain and hoarded it according to the advice, and that the agriculturists are ultimately responsible for the famine.

Sir, I shall now deal with the profiteering in foodgrains by the Government of Bengal. The Government of Bengal had admitted that they made some profits on wheat purchased from Punjab, but what about profiteering in rice purchased within the province. The Government of Bengal fixed Rs. 10 per maund as the ceiling price of paddy from 25th September last and was requisitioning stock wherever they could find it at that rate to be delivered by the stockist at his own risk and costs at Government Stores or at Government appointed Mills. The ceiling price of rice for that was fixed at Rs. 20 per maund. Now, Sir, one and a half maunds of paddy yield 1 maund of rice and the milling charges are not more than a rupee per maund. May I ask who was pocketing the balance ? I want the Government of India to enquire into that and ask for an explanation from the Government of Bengal. Sir, Mr. Sen has referred to the want of confidence on the part of the people of Bengal and he wants the confidence to be restored. How can the people have confidence in a Government which is corrupt from top to bottom.

Sir, I know of cases in villages not from Calcutta where agriculturists who owned a little more land than an average cultivator but who had not hoarded stock except what was necessary for the maintenance of their families till the next harvest, were asked to pay a bribe ranging from Rs. 100 to Rs. 500 and on their failing to do so reports were made against them of having a hoarded stock and notices served on them to deliver a hundred maunds of paddy each to the Sub-Divisional Headquarters. Their appeals to the Sub-Divisional officer and then to the District Magistrate for an enquiry about the actual state of affairs were summarily rejected and no enquiries made as sought for. These poor villagers had no other alternative but to purchase paddy in the black market at a very high price and deliver the same in the fear of their being sent to prison. Such is the state of affair which is prevailing in Bengal. In one case, the wise District Magistrate noted in the petition of a man who had a family 15 adults and 15 children, that he may be allowed to keep the stock for the adult persons of his family 4 chhataks *i.e.* half a pound of rice a day till the next harvest and nothing was allowed for the children, presumably he thought

that the children of cultivators in Bengal live on milk diet. Sir, The Government of India is having a grow more food campaign. Does the Government of India know that an able-bodied cultivator requires one a and half pound of rice daily to have the strength and stamina to till the soil. I warn the Government of India that if they do not allow the agriculturists to keep sufficient foodgrains for himself, his family, his labourers and for the seed required, instead of growing more food, half the land in Bengal next year will remain uncultivated. Now Sir, I would urge the Government of India not to allow the Government of Bengal to touch the *aman* Crop. The Government of Bengal, I understand has appointed the same purchasing agents whose hands are not very clean in last year's transactions. If any purchase is made, it should be done through a purchase committee directly under the control and supervision of the Government of India. The agriculturists should be allowed to keep sufficient to carry him through the year and the price of other necessities of life should also be controlled and they should be made easily available

Now Sir, I find amendments have been moved to enquire into many things about the present situation but before all an enquiry should be made into the conduct of Sir John Herbert who was more responsible than anybody else for the present situation in which Bengal has been placed. He was a thoroughly incompetent Governor and within a few months of his assuming office, it was being farcely asked, who was the real Governor of Bengal, Sir John Herbert or Lady Mary Herbert or the company of trios Messrs. Carter, Porter and Baker. Bengal has heaved a sigh of relief that Sir John Herbert has resigned though on account of illness and not a mouse wept that he has relinquished office. The people of Bengal would have been more glad if he would have been recalled and sent away in disgrace.

Lastly, may I say Sir, that all eyes in Bengal are on you Mr. Sen and your Chief Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava. They hope that you will not fail Bengal in its dire need.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR : (Central Provinces : General) : Sir, the food situation in the country is getting very acute. We are receiving news about the deaths from starvation in Bengal, which have been published in the newspapers. We are receiving news about the deaths of people in Orissa and in Malabar from starvation. So, there is something wrong somewhere and therefore we have to face this situation. Sir, it is not the sound of bull's fight that has attracted the attention of the world to the situation in Bengal but it is the pangs of the dying population there and the voices of the dead that has attracted the attention of the world. In Calcutta and Bengal we hear of husbands for saking their wives, of parents for saking their children and selling them as slaves, and still, Sir, some of my Honourable friends have got the audacity to say that it is the sound of bull's fight that is responsible for the situation in Bengal. Sir, I do not want to dilate on that point further, but from the statement made in the Bengal Legislative Assembly I can prove that it is not on account of the controversy between two political parties that we have to face this situation but it is on account of the maladministration not only on the part of the Bengal Government or the Government of India but also on account of the neglect of His Majesty's Government that we have to face the present situation. His Majesty's Government knew that Burma was gone, the Secretary of State knew that Bengal was supplied with rice from Burma and I ask the Right Honourable the Secretary of State what arrangements were made to supply rice to Bengal. The Secretary of State is expected to know that India, though an agricultural country, is unfortunately not self-sufficient in the matter of food. Why did not His Majesty's Government and the Secretary of State make arrangements for shipping foodgrains from outside for the consumption of the population of Bengal ? Sir, many real and imaginary causes have been advanced for the existing situation in Bengal. Much has been said about hoarding and profiteering. But I am of the definite opinion that in this matter the various Governments are also not free from blame. I concede that there is a small number of profiteers who are exploiting the miseries of the people of Bengal. But I submit that Government are also responsible, and not only the Provincial Government but even the Government of India. Therefore, the blame should not be laid only on the shoulders of profiteers and hoarders. It is only this morning that we heard from the Honourable Mr. Sen that the Government of Bengal had made a profit of over Rs. 33 lakhs. Two days ago a statement was made by the

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Honourable the Food Member in the other House that there was some profit made in connection with the purchase of wheat, but that the accounts were not cleared up and after the accounts were cleared up the profits will be deducted. A statement of that type shows that even the Central Government is not free from charge. Now, Sir, the cultivators and the zamindars are always attacked by friends and foes alike for hoarding of foodgrains. I want to examine this question from the cultivator's point of view. If the cultivator keeps a stock for the use of his own family, for agricultural purposes, and for paying off the loans that he has taken in kind, is he in any way to be dubbed as a criminal ? Have not the Government and the various Government Departments stocked foodgrains for their own use ? Have not the Defence Services been supplied with stocks ? So, it is no use abusing the cultivator and attacking him in season and out of season. In India the position is that the cultivator never keeps stock that he does not need for his own purpose. A small cultivator is bound to bring his stock to the market for paying off the rent and for meeting his expenses for cultivation.

As the time is very limited, I now pass on to another point and that is on whom the responsibility should be fixed for this trouble in Bengal. In this connection I just want to make a passing remark about the propaganda that is being carried on in Great Britain against India. I do not hold any brief for the Nazimuddin Ministry or the Huq Ministry. I do not hold a brief for the Central Government. But, I do hold a brief for Indians as a whole and if people like Sir Alfred Watson and others carry on a propaganda that it is Indians who have brought about this situation in Bengal, and that they do not know how to manage their own affairs and therefore they do not deserve self-government or independence, I will like to join issues with people like him on this argument and I submit supposing we Indians were to say that the predecessor of Mr. Churchill was criticised in England for mismanaging war affairs and was asked to vacate in favour of Mr. Churchill, will we be justified in saying that the Britishers were quite incompetent to manage their war affairs ? I sound a note of warning to those Diehards—and the note of warning I am sounding is not only in their own interest but is also in my interest—that if this sort of propaganda is carried to its extreme end it will have a very demoralising effect on the Defence Services of India. The Indian element in the Defence Services of India—Indians who are laying their lives, who are shedding their blood—will certainly think that their countrymen are being unnecessarily regarded as unfit for self-government and for managing their own affairs. It is a slur on Indians as a whole. This sort of propaganda that has been allowed to be carried on in England ought to be condemned in severest terms.

Now, Sir, about the responsibility, I think in my humble opinion that His Majesty's Government is primarily responsible for the situation that exists in Bengal. If His Majesty's Government had made arrangements for shipping, if His Majesty's Government had regarded this thing as a war effort, then certainly priority would have been given for shipping foodgrains to India. The Minister in Australia said that a large quantity of foodstuff was available ; but the United Kingdom does not make shipping available. I ask, Sir, in all earnestness is it not the duty of His Majesty's Government to see that the morale of the people is maintained ? Is it not the duty of His Majesty's Government to see that Bengal which is likely to be attacked by the Japanese is free from this trouble. His Majesty's Government have neglected their duties so far as the situation in Bengal is concerned. I therefore hold them primarily responsible. So far as the Government of India is concerned, I do not attach any importance to the neglect on their part. My argument is that after all the Government of India is a subordinate branch of His Majesty's Government. Sir, a statement was made by a friend of mine in the other House that if you press a button in Delhi everything will be all right. I say No. Delhi has not got the button. The button is in Whitehall. If you press the button in Whitehall the current comes to the Government of India. It is not the Government of India which is responsible for all. Of course the Government of India has no policy of its own. They did not chalk out a policy. But at the same time I must bring to the notice of my friends who are furious against the Government of India that if the Government of India desire to lay down any well thought out policy the policy has to be approved

by the Secretary of State and His Majesty's Government and then only the Government of India can carry out that policy. Primarily His Majesty's Government is responsible for this state of trouble and not only the Government of India. We have before us many proposals for remedying the situation. I, Sir, personally do not attach importance to conferences, speeches and resolutions on the subject. I want food, more food, and the starving people of Bengal to be saved from death. If conferences, resolutions and speeches in this House and the other House have not improved the situation, I personally think that the debate on the food situation is unreal. After all how did the Government of India move in the matter ? The Government of India held conferences with Provincial Governments and found that some of the Provincial Governments were recalcitrant in carrying out the policy of the Government of India and ultimately the Government of India had to succumb before them. What I want to submit is this. The most important remedy that lies for consideration is that the Central Government must have full powers in these matters and if the surplus provinces do not carry out the policy of the Government of India the Government of India must be able to force their policy on them. India should be regarded as one unit so far as the food administration is concerned.

Sir, I am one of those who have for a very long time been thinking of not interfering with the Provincial administrations when some shadow of Provincial Autonomy is given to the Provinces, but when I am faced with this situation of thousands and lakhs dying of starvation I think it is for the Government of India to chalk out a policy, a policy not dictated by Whitehall but a policy framed in consultation with responsible Indians and taking into consideration the needs of the Provinces. A well thought out plan should be chalked out and it should be given effect to and if the Provinces do not carry out that policy the Government of India must make them carry out that policy. If they think that constitutionally it is impossible for them to carry on under the Government of India Act the necessary amendments should be made but, Sir, for want of amendments or on technical grounds it must not be said by the Government of India that the Provinces are not carrying out their policy and that therefore they are helpless.

Sir, so far as Bengal is concerned I personally think that the affairs have been mismanaged but just to please my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam I would read a sentence from the speech of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee, who has been condemned in certain quarters in season and out of season and who is giving his precious time for saving the people of Bengal without taking into consideration the communal point or without thinking even for a moment about the controversial point so that my Honourable friend may be disillusioned on this point. Sir, as long ago as on the 14th July, 1943, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee stated :—

" If the Muslim League is in opposition and if this side is in the Cabinet (that is his side), even then that Government cannot solve the problem ".

If Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee and others, Sir, in Bengal have a Coalition Ministry, a Ministry representative of all interest in Bengal, that Ministry only will be able to inspire confidence in the public of Bengal.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Sen, said that it is not the want of quantity of foodgrains but the breakdown in the public confidence that has resulted in this drastic situation in Bengal. I submit, Sir, if he can influence his masters in Whitehall to bring about the situation in Bengal, the Bengalis will be very thankful to him.

Sir, even according to the reports coming to us from Bengal it seems that though a large quantity of foodgrains has been supplied to that Province stocks have not been built up and people do not know where their foodgrains have gone. If that statement is correct, Sir, then I should submit that the Government of India should impress upon His Majesty's Government to set matters right in Bengal and that they can do only when a Coalition Ministry is formed.

Sir, I do not want to take up the time of the House as my time is very limited but I must submit, Sir, that the policy that has been followed up till now by the Central Government has failed and a new policy inunciated by the new Member has to be given a trial but about that new policy of procurement I should like to sound a note of warning and that is that procurement of foodgrains from cultivators should not be forced. Procurement from Provinces should be obtained.

[Mr. V. V. Kalikar.]

after taking into consideration the needs of the cultivators and agriculturists. Otherwise, Sir, the result will be as we see in Calcutta. People from agricultural areas and landless labourers will flock the cities and towns and they will create the same situation as we have to face today in Calcutta. I, therefore, submit, Sir, that so far as this policy of procurement is concerned it should be brought into effect after taking into consideration the needs of the agriculturists.

Sir, so far as my Province is concerned we have got a certificate from the Government of India in this White Paper that have supplied our quota to Bengal. My Province is not a surplus Province; it is neither a deficit Province; it is just self-sufficient. You know, Sir, that in the four districts of Berar we do not grow rice, so the four districts of Berar are dependent on the rice grown in some districts of Central Provinces, but in spite of that, Sir, we have to get wheat. We are deficit so far as wheat is concerned; we are surplus so far as rice is concerned and for the wheat we are dependent upon the Punjab.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will the Honourable Member give us some idea about the prices of rice?

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: The prices of rice have gone four times over the price level that existed before the war.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I am told it is Rs. 19-6-0 per maund.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Your time is up. I will give you a few minutes more.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: Sir, so what I submit is this that the policy that has to be followed should be carried out only with very great consideration for the needs of the people living in the rural areas. So far as Bengal is concerned, they need not only foodgrains but clothes. Winter is approaching, and the Government of India should make arrangements for supplying clothes to Bengal so that in winter people do not die of exposure just as they are dying of hunger. All necessary steps should be taken to secure medicine. We understand that there are many deaths from cholera, and if the Government of India fail to supply to the Provincial Government the necessary medicine for saving the people from death, they will be held responsible for not doing a primary duty to the people of Bengal. I therefore submit that these suggestions should be adopted before carrying out any policy which the Government of India may lay down.

In the end, I congratulate my Honourable friend Mr. Sen on giving a very lucid and frank statement to us on behalf of the Government of India, but, Sir, when important speeches like that of Dr. Kunzru, who visited Bengal and saw the conditions on the spot, were made yesterday, the Honourable the Food Member was not present in this House. I regret his absence, and hope that he will be more careful in future in attending important debates in this House.

THE HONOURABLE MAHARAJADHIRAJA SIR KAMESHWAR SINGH OF DARBHANGA (Bihar: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, The food situation which is causing so much misery, so much stir and so much wordy warfare in this country today has originated less from the faults of nature than from the faults of man.

People connected with agriculture were never seriously consulted and even when they were consulted proper attention was not paid to what they said. To solve the problem of Food in India they thought it proper to find a man whose chief qualification was his complete ignorance of Indian conditions. His knowledge was derived from files containing faulty information received from the Provincial Governments. The Government always do that. They look to the West and not to this country for curing India's ills, although past experience should have made it clear to them that it is not the right thing to do. Most of the present troubles of the Governments in India are due to the fact that they are too rash in transplanting Western ideas, Western methods, Western systems on the Indian soil. We have no doubt assimilated some of them. But our growth has been stunted. Our loss is greater than our gain. If only we had been allowed to grow naturally this country would not have looked as barren as it looks today. We would have been a powerful ally of Britain and not a helpless critic. Let the Government cease to un-Indianise India and help her to revive her old indigenous institutions; and she will find that her troubles are over. So long as they use their

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power and position to shape her according to the alien standard they will be disappointed and will also disappoint India. No doubt, the Member in charge of the Department when the crisis arose happened to be an Indian and a native of the province which was affected the most. But had he relied on his own knowledge of things—howsoever out of touch he might have been then with the current events —and not allowed his Secretary to experiment with unsuitable remedies, things would not have come to such a pass for I cannot believe that any Indian, be he a prince or a peasant, would show such a lack of understanding of Indian conditions as has been done by the Food Department. Conditions so greatly vary that the same remedy cannot be applicable with equal success both in England and India.

The Government were indeed unprepared for this eventuality. All seemed to be controllable despite the fall of Burma and natural calamities that befell Bengal. But when the groans of dying men, women and children and wails of starving millions rent the sky it was all hustle and bustle. Summoning of experts, Food Conferences, Food Committees, debates, took place one by one. In their hurry, however, they forgot to take advantage of the agencies that already existed in the country and embarked on experiments of Western methods to deal with the problem. I need not repeat to this House what has been done so far. The Honourable Members know it already. In one word, their experiments have been signal failures.

Much attention seems to have been paid to Calcutta and urban areas. Traders have been employed as Government agents and Mills have been controlled to meet the needs of the urban population. The object has still to be achieved. The rural area (where foodstuffs is produced) has, I am afraid, not received the attention it deserved. Instead of supplying food to the deficit rural area, food was indiscriminately collected from villages with the result that misery overtook both the urban and the rural population. What did they do in the rural areas to relieve the distress ? Did they take advantage of the village Panchayats ? Did they take advantage of the administrative machinery of the Landlords which, as their own old records would show played such a conspicuous part during the last Famine of Bengal in 1896-97 ?

If the Government would look to the Minutes of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal of those days and to the Final Resolution of the Government of Bengal on the Famine of 1896-97 they would fully know what part the administrative machinery of the Landlords played at that time of stress. My uncle, the then Maharaja of Darbhanga, figures prominently in these despatches. He was allowed to relieve the Government of the care of a large tract of the country, and this is what His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal has recorded in his minutes about his work :—

" I inspected several of the Raj works and was struck by the completeness of organisation and intimate personal knowledge of the circumstances of the villages possessed by the staff."

The nature of the organisations of landlords as compared to those of the Government has been further emphasised in the Resolution of the Government of Bengal on the Famine of 1896-97. In Chapter X of the Resolution it is stated, again in relation to my uncle.

" The Scheme of relief organised by the Maharaja in Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur consisted in the offer of labour on works on a system of piece work at rates somewhat above the normal to compensate for the dearness of grain, and giving of gratuitous relief on very much the same lines as Government with the difference " (*mark the words*)" that the Raj enjoyed the advantage of a village staff already on the spot, who possessed a personal acquaintance with the needs of the villagers and over whom they had various means of control."

Personal touch and continuity of relationship are indeed the distinguishing features of the organisation of the landlords and it is with a view to draw the attention of the Government to the point and not to blow my own trumpet that I have read these extracts.

Sir, in spite of the fact that successive Governments have by emphasising differences and making laws calculated to foster class conflict by heavy taxation and various other ways systematically reduced the capacity of the landlords to do good to the public they have, thank God, not yet succeeded in uprooting it.

The Landlords have still got the administrative machinery which keeps them in close and direct touch with the cultivators. For generations they have mutually

shared the joys and sorrows and let me hope they will ever continue to do so. Both in the matter of procurement and distribution these indigenous agencies would be much more efficient than the Government officials, who by reason of their short-lived association with the people of the particular area in which they are placed are unmindful of the consequences. There is yet another aspect of the question which was very lucidly expressed by Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal at a Durbar held at Belvedere on the 8th December, 1896. He said :—

"I specially commend to your attention the small people of respectable standing who can not dig and are ashamed to beg the poorer *bhadralog*. For them let the tact and good-will of their wealthier fellow countrymen find suitable means of succour. The Government does not repudiate its own obligation to keep all classes of its subjects alive. But (*mark the words*) its methods are necessarily rough and indiscriminating and into some classes of cases it is hardly seemly for it to pry."

The Governments of today have frozen all these considerations and experiences. They look to the landlords only when they are in search of some scape goat ; and perhaps the latest instance of it is found in the debates of this very House. The Food Secretary when he initiated the debate on Food situation in this House on the 12th August last observed :—

"It is that perhaps the big zamindars and landowners of this country have not appreciated the extent to which it has been put in their power to assist India in her food difficulties today. They have not perhaps realised the full significance of the fact that the small cultivator is prone to do what the bigger man does. If the bigger man sells his stocks, the small man would be inclined to do the same. If the bigger man hoards his stocks for a higher price, so will the little man. As regards the landowner or zamindar who takes action to dissuade the cultivator from surrendering his surplus, I beg to be excused from making comment : I feel as a soldier I have not the requisite degree of delicacy of expression.

In this first stage of physical control, the big landowners and zamindars have a responsibility and an obligation. Speaking in my personal capacity, I hope the future will show a better leadership than has been apparent in the last six months I have been in the Food Department."

Sir, I am not aware of any such instance. If a landlord advised the cultivators to keep enough for their own needs and for the needs of their neighbours he in my opinion did not do anything wrong. After all what is really a marketable surplus ? The cultivator has to pay agricultural labour in kind, advance loan of grain to his neighbour, give charities to the needy besides meeting the needs of his family. A landlord in the permanently settled area generally has very little land which he cultivates himself. Bulk of his land is settled on cash rent basis with his tenants. Therefore he has to depend more upon the market than on his own land. If he has the produce of his own land in such a quantity that he can spare after meeting the requirements of his family the first claimants on such produce are his employees and their family. Any thing beyond these essential requirements can be called a marketable surplus in the proper sense of the term.

In my own province the period of "control" was obnoxious owing to the confused, contradictory, unco-ordinated, unimaginative and dilatory action of the various officials who dealt with the matter. The period of "free trade" was disastrous. The monopolist purchasing agent of Bengal who was to be paid his remuneration on values and not on maunds and for one reason or the other whose conduct and relationship with the Government of Bengal is still shrouded in mystery brought Bihar the misery of high prices. It was to the interest of that purchasing agent to raise the price level. The era of hoarding was ushered in. Hoarding was practised not by cultivators, not by landlords but by various departments of Governments (both Central and Provincial) as well as by industrial organisations. There was a keen competition between these powerful hoarders and the cultivators who did not keep the food-grain for his own use are in great difficulties. Notes and coins cannot satisfy their hunger.

Can a Government which allowed one province to profiteer at the expense of another and found itself powerless to stop high-handed-ness and corruption that permeated the various operations connected with food accuse the landlords of bad leadership in the circumstances in which they were placed even if the charges of the Food Secretary be true ?

The Food Secretary talks of the little man following the bigger man. Who is really the bigger man today ? It is the Government ; and what example have they

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set ? They are the biggest hoarders and why should the Food Member have any cause of complaint if the little man follows the same example.

Again the Food Member talks of obligations and responsibilities which the Landlords have. Yes, I acknowledge them and as I have already indicated my trouble is that the Government are making it more and more difficult for us to discharge them. I have already stated how the co-operation of the landlords were sought at the time of the last Bengal Famine and how they have been maligned at the present time.

My apprehension is that if the execution of the policy laid down in the Food-Grain Policy Committee Report, which theoretically looks nice, is left entirely in the hands of the Government officials and those intimately connected with land are left out as they have so far been, the remedy will prove to be worse than the disease. We have heard lots of stories about the bunglings and vagaries of Rationing Authorities and their underlings. We have heard how the local officials have so far miserably failed in the distribution of kerosene oil and salt to the villages. We have been told about diverse methods of corruption and favouritism subsisting in the offices of the Government. Of course, we have also heard that some of the culprits have been punished. But how many there may be who have escaped punishment ? It is indeed a herculean task to check malpractices. We should therefore have such agencies as may have intimate acquaintances with local conditions and be of unquestionable probity. To my mind the best method of procuring is through the machinery of landlords and the best method of distribution is through village Panchayats functioning under the immediate supervision of landlords. We have seen that reliance on middlemen unconnected with land have only encouraged the multiplication of hoarding-centres and black markets and price control machinery has almost collapsed.

Of late, Government offices have been constantly multiplying and expanding with the result that a number of inefficient men, untrained for the work to be done have inevitably been employed. Therefore the Government officials who are ever migratory remain, ignorant of the real situation prevailing in the villages. Why should the raw men be relied upon to do the delicate and important piece of work when old and tried systems already exist ?

Sir, we are asked to " Grow More Food ", and certain useful suggestions have been made in the Gregory Report. But there is a serious problem connected with it and it is that at present there is a great scarcity of bullock power. The prices of cattle have risen beyond all proportion. In this country we cannot expect machines like Tractors to replace bullocks. So, unless this problem is immediately tackled " Grow More Food " campaign will not proceed as efficiently as desired.

Then Sir, it is now admitted by all that one of the main causes of our food-trouble is inflation and it is stated that it can be got rid of by (1) taxation, (2) borrowing and putting consumers' goods in the market. Let me tell the House that those who depend on land for their living have very little purchasing power left to them and the burden of taxation falls very heavily on them. The only source of their income is agricultural produce and they have to buy everything else at a very high price. I have roughly indicated their essential liabilities and to them may be added, land revenue or rent, local and provincial taxes, interest on loan, etc. The War has of course brought windfall to those who have war contracts or been taken into services connected with war. Any further taxation should therefore be introduced after due consideration of the burden already on the shoulders of those who will be affected by it. So far as the other two matters are concerned I need not say much because they are on voluntary basis and each man will judge his own capacity to contribute to the effort of counteracting inflation. I trust the Government also will stop pumping paper currency into the country and with due regard to the actual state of things adopt other fiscal devices to check inflation while asking us to co-operate in the drive.

Sir, before I conclude my observations on this motion I wish to say a word about price-control. It has not worked successfully up till now because of the formation of black markets. It will cause great hardship to the agriculturists if simultaneously with the application of price control on food stuff the prices of other commodities

(specially those essential to them like cattle, farm implements, medicines, cloth) are not controlled and generally prices are not stabilized. The essential commodities have to be made available to the people before one can expect to control the price successfully. The matter requires careful handling and I trust that the Government will see to it that the entire scheme is a balanced one and it is carried out in such a manner that no real hardship is caused to any section of the people.

Sir, I am not an expert and figures, which even the experts say are very often incomplete and deceptive, bewilder me. My remarks are those of a layman who gathers his experience from his day to day life. I am happy to find that His Excellency the Viceroy has taken up the question of food in right earnest, and I have no doubt that he will firmly handle the situation. Provinces should not be allowed to have their own way. We have seen how shamefully they have behaved. India is one and indivisible unit and the centre must guide and control matters like this in which different parts of this country are interdependent on one another. If in the very beginning the Central Government would have taken up the question in its own hands instead of being content with merely issuing instructions to the Provinces this crisis would probably have been averted. But it is never too late to mend. I trust H. E. the Viceroy, who is also an eminent Field Marshal, will not let the mistakes of the past recur and fully utilize his powers to keep a strong grip over the doings of the provinces.

I am also in agreement with much of what has been recommended in the report of Food-Grain Policy Committee. All I wish is that no hardship may be caused to the general public in the execution of the policy of the Central Government, corruption should be checked to the utmost possible limit and the indigenous systems of this country should be utilized to their fullest extent.

This internal peril is indeed too serious for words at a time like the present one when the enemy is so close to us. If words could put an end to it, it would have long ceased to exist. Words are often confusing and useless. We do not need them. We need energetic action on the part of Government and whole-hearted co-operation of the Governments and the peoples of both British and Indian India.

THE HONOURABLE SIR N. GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR (Madras : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, we are debating a very important question and have had six days of speechifying on it, four in the other place and two in this. It is difficult to say anything new after all this flood of oratory. I shall try in the few remarks that I shall make on this occasion to avoid referring to points which have been referred to at length in other speeches and shall try to be as brief as possible. There are two main issues with which we are concerned. One is the situation in Bengal as it has developed up to date. The second is the larger issue of the proper food policy for this country. Of the appalling character of the tragedy in Bengal it is indeed very difficult to speak with restraint. But we suffer under the great disability of not having sufficient facts placed before us which would enable us to give a proper judgment on the situation. Statistics and figures of the most ordinary description which could throw light on that situation have not been forthcoming. Take merely the question of the mortality figures. Mr. Amery at one time placed the mortality at 1,000 a week. The Food Member in the other House estimated it at something like 58,000 odd up to date. I gathered when I was listening to the debate in the other House that an Honourable Member of that House had estimated it at 16 million. We have had an estimate from one Honourable Member of this House only a little while ago that it would be about 1 million. And only in this morning's papers we had a Special Correspondent of the Times of India reporting that he estimated the deaths among Namasudras alone at 1 million. Well, these are wild figures and I do not think that either the Government of India or the Government of Bengal claim any greater accuracy for the estimates they have given than what could be claimed by the Honourable Member of this House who estimated it at 1 million or by the Special Correspondent of the "Times of India." We have, however, had the benefit of an estimate by the Honourable Pandit Kunzru who after a long tour in the province has come back and estimated the mortality figure at something like 50,000 a week or was it a day ?

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : 50,000 a week! That is the most conservative estimate. My fear was that it was nearer one lakh than 50,000.

THE HONOURABLE SIR N. GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR : As a matter of fact, another gentleman, formerly a member of the Legislative Assembly, who made a similar tour in Bengal, actually gave me the figure of one lakh per week. For a person who comes from the Madras Province who is accustomed to deal with vital statistics it has been a matter of amazement that there could be these huge discrepancies about estimates of mortality. But then the fact apparently is the Bengal administration is thoroughly disorganised. Mr. Amery's figure was of course fantastically inaccurate. The 16 million estimate of an Honourable Member of the other House was also, I suppose, equally fantastic. But I must say that it is by no means improbable that the Honourable the Food Member's estimate of 58,000 odd up to date is very much under the mark. The Government, I think, should make a determined effort to make a nearer approach to fact by taking special steps and obtaining less unreliable figures. But even if the Food Member's figure of 58,000 odd up to date can be taken as correct it is a staggering total for a famine in modern times. It is no doubt not uncommon for famines to occur in the country even in these days. Famines are due to failure of rains, failure of harvests or other natural calamities but the credit has always been claimed for British administration in this country that the technique of administration that has been developed as a result of the recommendation of two Famine Commissions has been so perfected that the ravages of famine when it does occur are always reduced to the minimum possible. It is indeed difficult to recall any famine within the last half a century or more when the mortality was anything so high as it is in Bengal today. The only famine to which we have to go back for purposes of comparison is the one which occurred in South India in 1876-77, nearly 70 years ago. The question of the prevention of famine and the tackling of famine when it does occur has received very great attention in the past and as a result the technique of famine administration has been so developed as to avoid altogether anything like mortality from starvation. I may say that in my own Province I held the office of Famine Commissioner for two years and had to tackle with a famine in the Ceded Districts in the course of which lakhs of people were on relief. I cannot recall that during that period even a single death was reported as having been due to starvation either on the works or in the area for which those relief works were organised. We have had a similar famine in the same part of the Madras Presidency this year. Lakhs of people have again been on relief and I have not heard that there has been a single death due to starvation in connection with that famine area. But look at Bengal. There deaths are mounting every day. I have tried to study such facts connected with the Bengal famine as I have been able to glean from various sources, in the absence of any authoritative account of them given to us either by the Government of India or the Government of Bengal, and after this study it is a matter of the greatest perplexity to me how the approach of famine in Bengal in the current year was not detected in proper time and adequate measures were not taken to save human life. I am afraid that in trying to diagnose the situation in the Province attention was concentrated too much on the supplies of foodgrains available either in the Province as a whole or the supply that was needed for a city like Calcutta and controversies went on over the failure of the efforts made to supply that total deficiency or as to the manner in which such supplies as were received were mismanaged. This is no doubt an important consideration but it has obscured responsibility for watching the appearance of famine conditions in the districts and taking any effective steps to tackle them ; also attention seems to have been concentrated mainly on the supply of foodgrains to meet the deficiency in Calcutta and Greater Calcutta. The conditions of the mofussil do not appear to have been the concern of any responsible person to watch. Though famine conditions of a serious nature should have prevailed for months it does not appear that either the Bengal Government or the authorities at Delhi or Whitehall were made alive to their existence until towards the middle of August when the number of deaths due to starvation in Calcutta and the agitation set up by the " Statesman " forced matters on the attentions of the authorities.

So far as the food supply position in the Province is concerned I have again to get my information from across the seas from the speech of Sir John Anderson in the House of Commons. He said :—

"To all appearances as far as Bengal is concerned up to the end of the last year there was no particular cause for worry. The rice harvest in 1941-42 was exceptionally good. It was definitely in excess of local rquirements at the end of 1941."

This was confirmed by the Honourable the Mover of the present Motion when he said that statistically the carry-over figure for rice for 1941-42, that is to say, I presume, the stock that should have remained unconsumed, was 1·5 million tons. In the year 1942 the prospects of the main paddy crop were normal until fairly late in the year when a considerable part of Western Bengal was visited by a cyclone and devastated by floods followed by a very serious insect blight. The combination of these causes produced a deficiency of 1·3 million tons. Even so, the position was not one which statistically gave room for any apprehension of famine conditions in the current year. In view, however, of what has supervened since it is an obvious conclusion that these estimates were not worth the paper on which they were reported. Indications of short supply however appeared in Calcutta soon after. There was a change of Ministry in April. In May and June there was a food drive for discovery of stocks which revealed, according to the present Governor, that there were not enough stocks in the Province to last till the *aus* crop came in and strenuous efforts were made both by the Central and the Provincial Governments to get supplies from outside. As much as 415,000 tons were brought into the Province between March and the end of September according to Sir Thomas Rutherford. A very large portion of these stocks was allotted for feeding Greater Calcutta and the essential services. Though the Governor does not tell us how much of this was sent to the districts yet it is obvious that the quantity must have been infinitesimal because the claim he makes is that this import for feeding Calcutta and Greater Calcutta relieved the districts from the pressure on their stocks by importunate buyers from Calcutta. According to the Prime Minister of Bengal, from 1st March to 31st August the balance sheet of food supplies to Calcutta was somewhat as follows :—

4 P.M.

	Lakh maunds.
Received from outside Bengal	65·30
Supplied to priorities in Calcutta, industrial establishments, public utility concerns, etc.	22
Cheap grain shops, bakeries, eating houses	15
Paddy and wheat for milling, reserves to meet demands of Calcutta priorities, etc.	11·79
Total	48·79

For September and October, the figures were :—

September—	
Receipts	32·5
Despatched to districts	7·48
October—	
Receipts	25·7
Despatched to districts	13·1

It is clear from these figures that the horrors of the situation in the districts of Bengal outside Calcutta and Greater Calcutta did not receive the attention which they should have received. It is obvious that the Government of Bengal were either not in full possession of, or turned a blind eye to, the facts of the situation till very late. It is reported that Mr. Suhrawardy, Minister of Civil Supplies in Bengal, very soon after the change of Ministry in April last, said :

"Prices of foodstuffs now prevailing in Bengal are purely speculative and bear no relation to the true stock position of the province at a whole. I am convinced that any deficit of the present year can be fully met from the carry-over of the 1941-42 crop."

[Sir N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar.]

About May 18, Sir Aziz-ul-Huque, in reply to an address, relied on the accuracy of the figures published and maintained that Bengal was not yet deficit in rice. On the 24th May, Sir Nazimuddin is reported to have definitely declared that the prices of foodstuffs would be brought to a lower level within a very short time. Then there was the conference on the 8th May, 1943, at which Major General Wood is alleged to have advised the Bengal Government that the fact that there was a sufficiency of food for Bengal should be proved statistically and given the widest publicity by advertising and repeating *ad nauseam* ! That is a very serious charge to make against a responsible officer of Government. I think it is up to the Government of India to say what truth there is in this charge—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Please bring your remarks to a close. Your time is up.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR : I was going to refer to the neglect of all the rules and regulations in the Famine Code, 1913, which has not yet been repealed in Bengal, and in the Famine Manual of 1941, and the neglect of all precautions which are indicated therein for being taken for the purpose of avoiding mortality. The saving of life is the paramount duty of the State and the responsibility for it primarily rests upon Government. There is also the question of delay in the taking of steps. The only conclusion that I, Sir, can arrive at is that the failure of the district officers in discharging the duties imposed upon them raises only three alternatives, namely, that they deliberately refrained from discharging their duties ; if so, the Ministry were badly served by the permanent services ; secondly, if the reports were made and the Ministers turned a blind eye to them and shelved them, the responsibility falls on their shoulders ; and there is also the alternative suggested, I believe, by the previous Prime Minister of Bengal, that action was rendered difficult in controlling the permanent services by conflicting orders issued, on the one hand, by the Ministry, and on the other, by the Governor. Whichever of these alternatives represents the truth, it constitutes, in my opinion, an administrative scandal of the first magnitude which should be thoroughly probed into by an impartial inquiry. And that is the reason why I would support the amendment moved by the Honourable Mr. Sapru. May I say a few words about the general food policy ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Yes, but please be very brief. You have exceeded your time limit.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR : The Government of India, by confession, had no policy before. They have a policy now, and that policy is based upon the recommendations of the Gregory Committee. The report, if I may say so, is a document of first class value, and is an exception to the generality of reports of the kind ; that the recommendations in respect of the present and the immediate future are in a form in which they could at once be translated into action is its greatest merit at the present juncture. In respect of the long range problem, namely, a great increase in agricultural production, I consider it has hardly touched the fringe of the vast sweep of that problem of agricultural reconstruction which cannot, in my opinion, be tackled successfully unless we are prepared thoroughly to overhaul our agricultural economy after examining on their merits and with reference to existing Indian conditions and the future that we visualise for our country, and for ourselves such radical issues as nationalization and private proprietorship collective and individual framing, the most suitable method of taxing land and the income therefrom, and so on. Government, I would suggest, should vigorously implement the recommendations which they have accepted as regards the present and the immediate future.

There is one remark of the Committee to which I would draw attention, because it is, I consider, the foundation of all their recommendations. That shows that they visualise the problem that they had to tackle in the proper way. In paragraph 2, on page 126, they say :—

" It is incorrect to say that next to the war the food problem is the most serious issue which faces this country. This is wrong. The food problem is a part of the war effort. Its settlement is as urgent as any that confronts the country in military terms."

The reluctance on the part of Government to place food supplies and distribution to civilians in addition to the military on the same footing as supplies of munitions has been due to its fear of the financial commitment involved in accepting full responsibility for feeding the entire population, for the responsibility would mean much more than guaranteeing sufficient stocks for feeding all; it would include an obligation to see to it that every person had a sufficient income to buy the minimum adequate ration, plus enough to cover other absolutely necessary expenses.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: These are your observations on the general policy. They do not apply to the amendments. Will you kindly conclude your remarks now? Sir Buta Singh.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR SIR BUTA SINGH: (Punjab Sikh): Sir, every one in this House deeply deplores the distressing conditions in Bengal. It is almost unimaginable that in any part of the civilised world people should suffer the pangs of starvation, that penury should pursue plenty and haunt the towns and countryside. We have been witnessing a great tragedy no one can deny.

The interest which H. E. the Viceroy, soon on arrival in India, has taken, with the full co-operation of H. E. the Commander-in-Chief, has greatly helped to ease the situation. The Army has been called out to help the civil population and the difficulties of transport are greatly relieved. Medical men have also been spared who will attend to the sick and under-fed.

It would be no advantage to dwell on the happenings of the past. We must bend our minds in preparing for the future. From all accounts it is clear that poverty is India's heritage and that unless we fight poverty and overcome it, what has occurred in Bengal may occur elsewhere also.

Another phenomenon which may have contributed, and some of us feel it has largely contributed, towards the happenings in Bengal and elsewhere is the policy of controls which has been initiated without organising the machinery for control and distribution. I can challenge any one to show that state agency is more efficient and economic than normal trade agency. I for one firmly believe that it is in restoring the confidence of both the producers and the traders and in increasing production that we can meet the future situation with some confidence.

My province has played up to the full in the matter of production and supply and I am sure will continue to do so in the future also. Honourable Members may be interested to know that the Punjab has brought under food grains cultivation an additional area of 33 lakhs of acres of land, resulting in the increase of food grains produced to the extent of about a million tons. Before the war started, Punjab used to export 7½ lakh tons of food grains but this year 15 lakh tons have been exported and more is going out. My province can justly claim the credit for supplying this additional quantity for use in distressed areas. This increase is directly the result of Grow More Food Campaign started by the Punjab Government.

The provinces which have some surpluses are the Punjab, U. P. and Sind. I should like to ask the Secretary, Food Department, to tell the House the quantities of food grains received from all the three provinces separately. I am sure the figures will reveal that the Punjab has given the largest supply at a price which is in parity with normal prices of wheat and rice and are definitely the lowest.

Will he also tell us how the price of wheat compared and now compares with the prices of rice and wheat charged by the U. P. and other surplus provinces.

There is a great deal of talk regarding requisitioning which means compulsory procurement, then rationing which depends on adequate supplies and then distributing them equitably. Requisitioning in a province like the Punjab will definitely do more harm than good. If compulsion is applied, the food grains will disappear again, with the result that the area which has been brought under wheat cultivation from cotton cultivation will go back to cotton or to other cash crops and there will be no surpluses available. The cultivator will grow just enough food grains for his own requirements leaving little or no surplus.

The impression is growing that the financial policy of the Government of India is to deprive the cultivators of their legitimate dues, that it is anti-industrial and the development of industry has been choked in the name of deflation. The impression is gaining strength and may have serious repercussions.

THE HONOURABLE MR. J. H. BURDER (Bengal Chamber of Commerce): Sir, We have listened to many days of debate in another place on the subject of food.

We have heard of the subject discussed in provincial legislatures and in public places and we have read much in the press.

What is it that we mostly hear—we hear of the experiences of gentlemen who have made brief visits to famine areas, and tragic stories they tell us. We hear criticisms of provincial governments—of the Government of India and of His Majesty's Government, for not having foreseen the trouble and for not having put it right.

We hear charges against the public of hoarding, profiteering and non-co-operation—charges of irregularities and inefficiency against the administration, and even charges against employers for having accepted the responsibility of providing food for their workers (a novel experience indeed for employers to be criticised for foresight and looking to the well-being of their labourers).

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (Bihar: Non-Muhammadan): Mr. President, If the Honourable Mr. Burder will give me one minute I shall place before the House proofs of what I said yesterday.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: What right have you to speak at this stage? I do not understand this constant interruption. You have not even asked my permission.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: How can I ask your permission, Sir, until I rise up and speak out.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You had 1½ hours yesterday. Why should you supplement your speech now?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: I am not going to supplement my speech. I am merely asking for an opportunity to explain what the Honourable Mr. Burder has not clearly caught.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You cannot ask a question when the Honourable Member is addressing the House.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: I am not asking a question. I am merely requesting him through you that if he will give me one minute, I shall place before the House the authority on which I made the statement yesterday.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: That, you have no right to do at this stage.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: The Honourable Member is quite anxious to have that explanation. The house clearly seems anxious to have the explanation.

THE HONOURABLE MR. J. H. BURDER: Sir, I have no objection if the Honourable Member wishes to explain his point very briefly.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Please be as brief as possible.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: I said yesterday that there was an effort made by the Regional Officer of the Bengal Government, Justice Braund, to make purchases on behalf of two private concerns. I am now placing the authority on which I made that statement. I have before me a responsible statement by a responsible Minister of the Punjab Government and this is what he says.:

"The Director of Food Supplies, Punjab, refused the offer of Rs. 28 per maund for 1,50,000 maunds of rice made by official agency on behalf of two private firms in Bengal as the price fixed in the Punjab at the time was Rs. 17 per maund. Thus the Punjab deliberately deprived itself of a profit of Rs. 1,950,000 on a single transaction and of further profits of over a crore of rupees on subsequent exports, if it had raised rice prices to Rs. 28 per maund which Bengal was apparently willing to pay."

My point, therefore, is that it is for the Government of India to ask this responsible Minister who makes such a definite allegation to say who this officer was who wrote to the Director of Food Supplies in the Punjab and which were the two firms on whose behalf he wanted to make purchases.—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: This is another speech. Please sit down. You should carry out my ruling.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: That is my explanation of the allegation that I made. The allegation is serious and remains unanswered. Let Mr. Burder answer it or let the Government answer it.

THE HONOURABLE MR. J. H. BURDER: I was saying that it was not sufficiently appreciated that employers who have been supplied under the Bengal Chamber's scheme have operated a system of rationing for the past eight or nine months and the ration that we have distributed has been on a basis that does *not* come up to the scale which is now considered sufficient for a worker and his dependants.

Now, Sir, I do not want to weary this House with a lengthy statement on the controversial subject of employers and their duty towards either the State or their workers, but I must, at this point, answer the misleading aspersions that have been cast against one body in Bengal—the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to whom an Honourable Member referred yesterday.

If any individual or party who purchases more than one day's requirements at a time is a hoarder, then we are as guilty as probably every Honourable Member in this House. But this I would like to say—the Bengal Chamber's scheme was instituted to assist Indian and European employers who had no organisation for purchasing their requirements to prevent employers competing with each other and thereby putting up the price to the detriment of each other and the public, and it certainly served that purpose.

Moreover the Bengal Chamber, at the request of the Bengal Government, made no purchases between December of last year and April of this year when the Bengal Government was endeavouring to purchase a quota of the last Aman crop. During that time we were supplied with our bare requirements by the Government and we never knew from week to week whether the next week's supply would be forthcoming or not—frequently it was not. In April, when the crop had got into the hands of the Bannias we were told we must thenceforth look after ourselves.

Furthermore, it is not sufficiently appreciated that employers who have been supplied under the Bengal Chamber's scheme have operated a system of rationing for the past eight or nine months and the ration that we have distributed has been on a basis that does *not* come up to the scale which is now considered sufficient for a worker and his dependents.

We are living in a confused atmosphere of charges, counter-charges and personal opinions, many, but not all, of which are exaggerated, ill-founded, parochial and political.

All these I suggest is neither helping the administration nor helping ourselves.

The right to criticise we must retain, but there is a point beyond which we can cease to be useful and in stead we only succeed in increasing the lack of confidence.

I consider that it is now the duty of public speakers and the press to ask themselves before they speak, or before they go into print, whether their comments are likely to be useful and in the public interest or more calculated to delay the day when we hope to see confidence restored.

I suggest that its return is the greatest necessity, and will prove the most powerful factor in assuring speedier success to the administration in overcoming the great problems with which they are faced. There are already signs in Bengal that the situation, thanks to the Military assistance we are receiving, is improving, *but* we all know that an improvement will not necessarily bring a return of confidence if there are elements in the country who, by injudicious words, or injudicious writings, persist in giving an opposite impression.

The Government of India, His Majesty's Government, and the Governments of the Allied Nations have now been fully aroused. The Government of India, moreover, have, at last, a definite policy to administer: the policy framed by the recent Food Conference which had before it the recommendations of the Gregory Committee—I think, Sir, we owe a tribute to that Committee for its comprehensive report which deserves the highest praise.

The recommendations of that Committee emphasise the necessity for statistics. They give specific recommendations as to how Government should proceed in the matter of procurement, imports, the provision of consumer goods, distribution, rationing and general administration. If we accept the policy laid down, I suggest we should for the present confine our energy to seeing that Government carries it out and provides us at regular intervals with a comprehensive statement of the

[Mr. J. H. Burder.]

progress or lack of progress that is being made in all parts of the country. It is imperative that such a statement should be in our hands in sufficient time to enable us to study it before the Legislature meets. In the absence of such a statement in good time we shall be deprived of the ability to offer intelligent and constructive criticism

The sort of statement that we hear at the opening of these debates is not sufficient. In future, I should like to see an account which will tell us where the recommendations of the Committee have been implemented, item by item, and where they have not been implemented and why not. With this before us, we shall be in a position to discuss real facts in a realistic way.

For the more distant future it is our opinion that a suitable body of the type of a Royal Commission should be appointed, in due course, to investigate the causes of the alarming situation into which we have drifted and to make such recommendations as will ensure that there is no possibility of a recurrence at any future date. The present is, in our opinion, not a suitable time for such an investigation. Inquiry of this nature would necessitate the attendance and much valuable time on the part of the officials concerned.

We cannot afford to see the Executive having their attention distracted when we demand that their whole time and attention must be devoted to feeding the people.

On the other hand, I suggest that if it is known that an inquiry will be held at some future date, when we may all have to account for our actions, it will have a useful psychological influence upon all concerned to give of their best from now onwards.

I do not think I can usefully add any constructive suggestions at this stage to the recommendations of the Food Grains Policy Committee. We may have some suggestions to make at a later date when Government have had more time to administer the policy which they have recently adopted. But I would say this : I sincerely trust that there will not be any material deviations from the line which they have now set for themselves. I will go so far as to say that an imperfect policy is better than no policy or one that is undergoing interminable changes.

In a debate of this nature it is difficult to avoid ground which has already been covered, and more ably, by other speakers. But I would like to emphasise the point which is mentioned in more than one place of the recommendations. I refer to the necessity of enforcement of Government's orders I am sure that Government will find that they have behind them a strength of public support which they have never dreamed of, immediately the public are convinced that Government means what it says.

I would further like to reiterate the words of the Leader of the European Group in another place when he said : " We cannot accept a situation in which the Central Government of this country has to say we cannot feed the people of India because this or that province will not co-operate ".

There can by now be no doubt in any one's mind that this is an all India problem and we cannot claim, in time of emergency, that the product of the land in one province is not the property of the whole country—if you carry such an argument to the logical conclusion, one section or one street in a town could live in plenty and maintain the right to see the next street starved.

We have been warned that there is going to be a world shortage of food at no distant date.

It is, therefore, imperative that we put our house in order—and I do not mean just the superstructure of the house—before that day comes. If we do not ; if we neglect the foundations it is an absolute certainty that the House will crash when the storm comes. The foundations to which I refer in this case are, and will be for many years to come, the food-growing provinces—the surplus areas.

Further, Sir, just as it is essential to extend control to all parts of the country, I would like to emphasise the necessity of extending control to *all* commodities—not only to the necessities of life which the cultivator must purchase, but particularly to all the principal crops whether they be for human consumption or for the feeding of cattle or for manufacture. Upon the prices which are earned this season for any and every crop will depend the cultivators' choice of next season's sowings.

In conclusion, I would appeal for a more serious drive in the "grow more food" campaign—Government can help with more generous and better distribution of agricultural implements and of supplies of seed. In addition a more intensive and more personal propaganda is required. We, too, can help and the press can help, by mobilising public opinion to such a pitch that every householder, every village and every Union Board is competing with each other in its determination to put every available biga of vacant land under food.

I have said the Press can help—I should say *more particularly* the Press, certain sections of which have, intentionally or unintentionally, aggravated our difficulties. Instead of a determined attempt to inspire the public to a better civic sense, to outcast the profiteer and the hoarder, you see nothing but propaganda calculated to increase lack of confidence—what value is there in this? The monetary sale value of hot news and the political value of encouraging all and sundry who may add their bit to the general embarrassment of the administration.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT (to the Honourable Sir Jogendra Singh): Do you wish to address the House today?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH (Education, Health and Lands Member): I think I may do it today because there will be other Members to address the House on the third day.

Sir, I agree with Sir David Devadoss that churning the waters of opinion, if it produces only divided counsel, is of little use. What we need is constructive proposals and constructive proposals with one object only: to increase the food production of India. A fact which we must not ignore is that in the six major Provinces the yield per head of population is no more than 24½ ounces *per capita*. It is from this yield that the cultivator has not only to feed himself but to pay his rent and to meet his cash obligation. I also agree with Sir David Devadoss that there is no magic wand which an agriculturist can apply to increase his production. Agricultural production is a process which takes a long time and what we have so far achieved in the Grow More Food Campaign, is no more than this, that we have diverted largely areas from short staple cotton to food crops and these areas may any moment return to short staple cotton and other cash crops, if the cultivator finds that grain crop is no more paying.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Hear, hear.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: Our problem is—and it is a problem that has existed for many years; it is not a problem that has appeared today after a very careful enquiry. General Megaw pointed out ten years ago the shortage of food. The prolem still remains unsolved. If we are to provide food for our increasing population and those who are under-nourished it will need planning and a persistent effort in producing more food for our growing population. The scope for development is narrowed by many factors. So far as the land which could produce easily, where the rain was good, or irrigation was available, every inch of such land is under cultivation. Even in Bengal, you find miles upon miles of rice, and, as you know, there are 26 million acres of rice crop which would be harvested within the next two or three months but these 26 million acres give less than half an acre per head of the population and the 10 million tons outturn which we expect will not give more than 4½ mds. per head. It is these figures which need attention when we talk of rationing and equitable distribution, because it is out of the yield of the land alone that we can distribute what is available.

We have 1,030,000 sq. miles of land, only 440,000 sq. miles is cultivated, 174,000 sq. miles is marked as culturable waste, another 92,000 sq. miles as unculturable and 136,000 sq. miles is under forest. Therefore nearly 2/5th of our land is under the plough and whether it is possible to bring the remaining 3/5th under the plough is the problem. Then there is land lying on the railway sides about which I approached the Railway Board and they are quite willing that it may be put under trees or cultivation, this land could be put under trees to provide fuel for villages along side the Railway line. The possibilities of bringing this area under cultivation for crops, for raising forest and grass is now under examination. If by investment of capital the culturable land can be brought under cultivation, we can add materially to our resources of food. There is no reason why we should not succeed, but the success would depend on the application of science, on the investment of capital and on the efficiency of our workers.

[Sir Jogendra Singh.]

The Honourable Dr. Kunzru drew my attention to the need of fertilizers, and asked whether we were importing any tractors for use for increasing cultivation. My own experience—and it has extended over many years—of tractor ploughing is that if prices go down to their pre-war level, tractor ploughing does not pay. At the present level of prices it is possible to use mechanical implements for ploughing. We have not neglected the supply of fertilizers. The procurement of fertilizers is under active consideration of the Supply Department, and we hope to get a fairly large amount if we can get it under the lease-lend scheme.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: If my Honourable friend will allow me, and if you, Sir, will allow me, I should like to draw the attention of the Honourable Member to the fact that the Gregory Committee recommends the manufacture of ammonium sulphate in this country, and not merely its importation from abroad ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: We are trying to get the machinery for the purpose, and in Mysore and some other places people are already trying to make ammonium sulphate. The quantity needed is fairly large—I think 300,000 tons—and it will take some time to produce it. We also have on order nearly 100 tractors which I expect are on their way, and we may any moment receive advice that they have arrived in this country.

Then there is the most important question of the development of village forests. If we can save the Farm yard manure which is now used as fuel, it is calculated that we can get 125 million tons of manure. The only way to save it is to develop village forests so that fuel for the villagers may be available. Our problem is Rural reconstruction. Our population is distributed as follows : 339 million people live in the villages, and 49 million people live in the towns. It is on the prosperity of these 339 million people that the prosperity of the towns depends. We need enough land for these 339 million people or other occupation. We can not increase the area. The problem in its correct perspective, reveals that we have no other alternative but to provide industrial employment for at least 30 per cent. of our population that now resides in the villages. The only way to provide industrial employment is to increase the purchasing power of this vast population. As long as their purchasing power is limited, it limits the expansion of industrial development. If their purchasing power is increased, industrial expansion for the time being, can be almost limitless.

I entirely agree that there is need for an all India agricultural and industrial policy. But at the same time I cannot ignore the constitutional limitations which limit the scope of my departments. Agriculture, Health and Education are primarily the concern of provinces. The Government of India at present can only advise, but cannot in any way direct or increase the tempo of progress. This is a problem which can be solved by the co-operation of the provinces. In my mind, I have no doubt that if we have a large national policy which is for the good of the whole country, the provinces will readily co-operate. It may be, that we have not been so far able to evolve a national policy.

There is, lastly, the problem of money. Money is the measuring rod of the labour of man. And on the measure you apply to value the labour of a man depends the progress of the future. Inflation is a puzzle. The puzzle is this : is sterilization of money the best means of stabilising prices for deflation has no other end, but to maintain value or the production of foods is a better way of neutralising inflation ? This is a problem which I put before you for consideration—what we should do to sterilize money, or make it productive. When the recovery plan was started in the United States, it was, by what they called pressing the pump there is pumping money that they started production. Our public men are only engaged in considering the sterilization of money it is more important to make money the servant of man and using it for productive purposes.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Government must supply the machinery.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: Then again, there is the question of the price of produce. When you ask me to increase production, can you find any other way of stimulating production than the price incentive ? I will tell you how

the parity of prices has been disturbed. Take rice and jute in Bengal, for instance. One maund of jute was equal to two maunds of rice before the war. Now, one maund of jute is equal 30 seers of rice. Then again, one maund of sugar was equal to three maunds of rice ; now, one maund of sugar is equal to 35 seers of rice. Take again, sugarcane : if the sugarcane is sold as dry fuel, it fetches more price than the sugarcane offered to the factories. These are important considerations which an agriculturist know. The agriculturist is clever enough to know what pays him, and he is wondering how his interests are being served by his representatives here and by his Government. Take, again, wheat. Wheat, in 1939, in Lahore was selling at Rs. 2-2-9 a maund. In July 1943 it was selling at Rs. 9-13-10 a maund—nearly four times the price it fetched before. But at the same time the living index in Lahore, which stood at 120, had risen to 330. The price has been merely trying to keep pace with the cost of living. You may take it that the cost of living also provides an index of the cost of production. Therefore, we must ponder over these facts and take no hasty decisions. We must agree that it is on the prosperity of the rural population that we can build up the future. My Honourable friend a little while ago referred to the foundation of life, but he did not define it clearly. I can do it for him. The foundation of life in India is agriculture. If you make this foundation stronger, you can build on it a structure which will endure. But if you weaken these foundations, everything else must crumble away. Our problem is planning at a number of key positions and planning wisely and well. We do not want any more inquiries and reports, because, so far as the Agricultural Department is concerned, we have the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture presided over by Lord Linlithgow, we have a very clear and able report of Sir John Russell and another report by Dr. Wright on cattle breeding. All that we need is, as my Honourable friend here pointed out, that these recommendations should be implemented. What happens generally is that reports are written and signed and hardly any action taken to implement the recommendation. I beg this House to concentrate their minds on constructive proposals. We have for long years dwelt on abstract thought, framed opinions and expressed views, but we have not easily made any constructive proposals. I heard the debates in the other House and I have listened to the debate in this House with very anxious care. I have found no constructive proposals which would help to build a better life for India, constructive proposals to raise the standard of living of our people, constructive proposals, in the words of our Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, to give people food, work and homes. If we concentrate on doing things, I can promise you, that within five years we can see a change for the better. But we must give up empty discussions and set up definite objective for attainment make our country an objective to place where a happier life is more universally possible. The need is to speed up the tempo of development of agriculture and to make money the servant of man rather than his master.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MAHENDRA LAL DAS : (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I am much thankful to the Honourable the President for the permission which he has given to me to speak out my mind in connection with the food problem which is under discussion on the floor of the House today. Sir, I come from Assam. I do not know if any of the Honourable Members have any idea of the place. It is so remote from here. No voice from Assam is heard at Delhi. As in the case of Bengal the question of the food problem is engaging the attention of all sections of people, so also in Assam the same question has been seriously engaging the attention of all sections of the people. At present, Sir, Assam is no longer a land of plenty as in normal times. Now she is passing through an abnormal atmosphere. Sir, since the beginning of the current financial year the people of Assam have been faced with a very acute type of food crisis, so much so that in June, 1943, in the local Legislative Council, an adjournment motion had to be moved by some Members to discuss the food situation. With your permission, Sir, I would like to read out a few lines just to enlighten the House with the picture with regard to the food problem in Assam. The adjournment motion was moved by Rai Sahib Apurba Kumar Ghosh in June, 1943 and there he said :—

" Within the last six weeks the prices of paddy and rice have risen to a height which was never even dreamt of before. The average ruling price of rice is about Rs. 30 per maund and this is beyond the purchasing power of the people with the result that a large number of people do not know what are two square meals a day."

[Mr. Mahendra Lal Das.]

This is the position, Sir. Then he said :—

"It appears to me that this unfortunate position is not due to non-availability of paddy and rice because if you want to purchase these commodities, you can have them provided you are prepared to pay the high and exorbitant price. Messrs. Steel Brothers have been purchasing rice and paddy at any price, and this is the main reason for the extraordinary rise in price of paddy and rice."

This is the situation which was discussed in June, 1943. Since then the Government have taken up the matter for consideration. The Government have taken up the cause of the Government servants. With your permission, Sir, I would like to place before the House a copy of a memorial giving the increased prices of articles in Assam. This memorial was submitted by one of the Government servants to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam. The memorial runs :—

"I beg respectfully to submit the following representation for favourable consideration of the Government and at the very outset must regret for the necessity of submitting the same being pushed to the extreme limit of my resources by the circumstances beyond my control."

Rice, the memorialist says, has risen in price from Rs. 4-8-0 per maund to Rs. 35, an increase of nearly 800 per cent ; mustard oil from Rs. 18 per maund to over Rs. 80, *i.e.*, an increase of nearly 500 per cent.; Dal from Rs. 0-2-6 to Rs. 0-14-0 per seer, *i.e.*, an increase of nearly 600 per cent.; Bread from Rs. 0-1-0 to Rs. 0-4-0, *i.e.*, by 300 per cent.; Milk from Rs. 0-1-6 to Rs.0-6-0, *i.e.*, by 300 per cent.; Fish—the price of this commodity, he says, has risen by 1,000 per cent. Thus, the prices of articles have gone up tremendously. This is clear from the statement which I have just made, Sir.

Now, Sir, in view of these circumstances the Government have taken up the cause of the Government officials. They have introduced the system of rationing and concessional rates so far as Government servants are concerned and in the case of Railway employees the Railways have taken up their cause and in their case as well the system of rationing and concessional rates have been introduced. In the case of tea garden coolies, the tea garden managers have taken up the cause of the coolies and the rationing system with concessional rates for purchase has been introduced in their case also. But in the case of the public absolutely nothing has been done by the Government in respect of rationing and concessional rates. It is only yesterday that I read in the papers, in the *Amrita Bazar Patrita*, that Government had reduced the price of rice to the extent of Rs. 22 per maund and paddy to the extent of Rs 12-8-0. But in the absence of strict control in enforcing control prices I do not know how far Government will be successful in carrying out their control scheme in an efficacious way.

5 P. M.

(At this stage the Honourable the President vacated the Chair, which was taken by the Honourable Sir David Devadoss, Chairman.)

Now, the population of Assam is increasing day by day for various reasons. It will not be wrong if I say that it has almost increased cent per cent. If any Honourable Member happens to go to a street, he will find that the street is full of destitutes from Bengal. If one happens to go to the railway stations, lots of starving people from Bengal will be found on platforms ; and the same is the case in villages, bazaars etc. Destitutes from Bengal have gone to Assam for shelter. Over and above that, there are businessmen and contractors from all parts of India carrying on business and contracts. In fields and jungles also there are people. There are military stations everywhere and there are military people. Assam has been placed in these circumstances. To speak the truth, Assam has got to pass an ordeal this time. It is doubtful if Assam can survive the ordeal. Last evening I came across an editorial remark in the evening paper and that has been rightly described——.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHAIRMAN (The Honourable Sir David Devadoss): You cannot read from a newspaper according to our convention. You can only make use of the information in your own words.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MAHENDRA LAL DAS : I am making use of the information here.

(At this stage the Honourable the President resumed the Chair.)

It says that Assam is a frontier province and Bengal is close to it. It is perilously situated and Japan may come through Assam at any time and attack Bengal. So the position of Assam is very precarious. The Government of India should take the case of Assam into consideration with regard to the food situation.

This is what the Honourabe Mr. Sen said in his speech:

"The revised plan was drawn up on the basis of surpluses declared by the Provinces and States."

Whether Assam is a province that has declared a surplus to be exported to some other province is a point on which I have no information. If it is a fact that Assam is one of the provinces that have declared surpluses, in that case under the present circumstances if that surplus is taken and exported to some other place, I am afraid Assam will soon catch the contagion of Bengal. There are already epidemics. Famine will soon overtake Assam if the surplus, if any declared, is taken away. At least it should be kept in abeyance temporarily for a few months. Otherwise there is the danger of famine is Assam also. With this submission I resume my seat.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR (Madras: Muhammadan): Sir, we have tabled an amendment asking for a Royal Commission to go into the matter. In tabling this amendment our object is not merely to fix and apportion blame wherever it is due, though even this purpose would quite justify asking for an enquiry, inasmuch as there has been so much talk imputing motives and partisanship to some agencies or individuals; besides that, as has been observed by most of my Honourable friends who have preceded me and the Honourable Mr. Burder in particular, there have been allegations and counter-allegations, charges and countercharges and all these require to be enquired into and investigated and the truth found out. But, Sir, ——.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS: Do it after the war.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR: It has got to be done now. Besides this, there is another and more urgent and more useful reason for our asking for the enquiry, and that is for the purpose of finding out the causes which have gone to weaken the position of the country to the extent that at the very first impact of a really serious crisis the resources of the country seem to be quite insufficient to meet the requirements of the situation. It is, Sir, as I said to find out these causes and to profit by our experience that the enquiry is needed just at present and not, as my Honourable friend, Sir David Devadoss wants to have it after the war. It is not a paper enquiry; it is an enquiry intended to find out the mistakes which have gone to militate against the efforts of the Government towards an amelioration of the conditions in the country.

To understand the position in the country it is necessary for us, Sir, to have in view the background and in trying to present the background for the proper understanding of the proposition before the House. I am glad, Sir, that my task has been very much lightened by what my Honourable friend Mr. Mahtha said yesterday. He has given on account of the various Commissions and Committees and enquiries that have been conducted by the Government for the purpose of finding the vital statistics in this country and also investigating the causes for the frequent visitations of famine in the various parts of India. Therefore, Sir, I would mention only one thing in this respect and that is just to make the observation that though for 30 or 40 years, if not even before that, the population of the country has been steadily increasing the Government did not take any effective steps, to stimulate agriculture in the country in order that the production in the country might be of the size to afford proper nourishment for the people in the country. I will just give you, Sir, an idea of the way in which all these enquiries have resulted and the account to which these enquiries have been turned. I will refer only to the investigation of the vital statistics in this country which was conducted by General Megaw only about ten years ago, to which investigation reference has been every just now by my Honourable friend, the Member for Education, Health and Lands.

As you know, General Megaw said that 39 per cent of the people in the country were properly nourished, 41 per cent poorly nourished, and 20 per cent badly nourished. But what is the result of all this labour, Sir. The result is that General Megaw finds the only useful advice and help that he could give to the population, to the people, of the country is to ask them to practise birth-control! This, Sir, was a counsel of despair and this is illustrative of the attitude of the Government in the country when they have to consider questions which are so vitally important for the welfare of the people of the country. You do not move your little finger to try and stimulate agriculture; you do not move your little finger to help the poor

agriculturist, whose bad lot, whose unhappy lot, has been the theme of every Commission's report and all that you ask is that now that the famines have become more scarce, now that the pestilence has become less severe, the best thing to do is to try to stop the flow of population in the country. As Mr. Jinnah remarked in the other House this increase in the population of 50 to 60 millions in the country has not come suddenly as a bolt from the blue. The people have not descended all at once on the land. The increase has been steady and if only those who had been in charge of the well-being, who have been the custodians of the health and welfare, of the people in the country, had discharged their duty properly, they had ample opportunity, every facility, to try and help the production in the country to keep pace with the increase in its population.

My Honourable friend, the Member for Education, Health and Lands just stated that one of the reasons why agriculture could not be stimulated was that it was a provincial subject. Sir, this Provincial Autonomy was started only about six years ago but what was the condition in the country before that. Until 1937, as you know, Sir, the most important portfolio which had a very vital, very important, bearing on the production of agriculture was a Reserved subject, I mean Irrigation. Even people like my Honourable friend, Sir Jogendra Singh, would admit that if agriculture has not made the kind of progress that it ought to have, it was mainly because of want of irrigation and this irrigation was a Reserved subject a subject under direct control of the Central Government. Was it not up to the Government during all these years until 1937 to have taken the necessary steps to try and give irrigation facilities to the agriculturists in the country? In my own Province, Sir, there has been a cry for putting into effect the scheme of Tungabhadra. Time and again it was brought to the notice of the Government that if only the Tungabhadra Project could be gone through lakhs of acres of land would become cultivable, but, Sir, money was found for many other purposes which were not of any urgent and immediate need but no money could be found for giving effect to the carrying out of this Tungabhadra Project which would have been such a boon, such a blessing to the people in the Ceded Districts and nearabout. The fact of the matter is, Sir, that all that the Government was concerned or anxious about was to get its taxes. It acted mainly as only a tax-gatherer and if it played any other part it was the part of the Police but the parts of the Police and the tax-gatherer are not the only two functions that devolve upon Government. The Government has the duty devolving upon it to try and make food available to its subjects—every section of the population in the country, and for making this statement, Sir, I have the authority of the Honourable the Food Secretary who spoke the other day in the other House. He laid a dictum and very correctly that—

"Food is the common property to which rich and poor have equal share and equal right."

If this is the dictum accepted by the authorities then they should see to it that the rich and the poor get their share alike from this common property. If the poor man is not able to get his due, is it not the responsibility of the Government? Is it not the duty of the Government to see that the poor man does get his due? After all, the securing of food and the nourishment and sustenance of the subjects is one of the elementary responsibilities of any Government of any civilized country.

Sir, as regards the situation which we are now considering, one of the reasons put forward by the Central Government is that the provinces non-co-operated. I am not going to dilate much on this since much has been said about it already. All that I wish to state now is this, that if the Central Government had a mind to do it, had the courage to do it, it could have enforced implicit obedience on the part of the provinces. It could have secured the co-operation and help of the provincial Governments in co-ordinating its efforts and bringing much needed relief to the people who were suffering in Bengal and other parts of the country. Does not Government resort to such powers when law and order is menaced? When law and order menaced, does the Government tolerate any indifference on the part of any, of the provinces? If the least

[Saiyed Mohamed Padshah Sahib Bahadur.]

danger is scented about the disturbance of law and order, the whole machinery of Government is set to work and word goes from the Central Government, and every province, every district, becomes a police camp. When it is possible to do that, is it not possible, is it not obligatory on the part of Government to take proper steps to see that the people get their nourishment, at least a bare sustenance?

I do not quite appreciate many other observations that were made by some of the speakers in the recent debates in the British Parliament, but the one redeeming feature about it is that a number of members who spoke insisted that the responsibility for feeding the people in India rested on the British Government—on the India Office and on the Central Government. There was no doubt in their minds that for much of the muddle which has happened the Central Government is responsible, however much or however little the provinces or the hoarders or the non-officials or others might be responsible—that the main responsibility devolved on the Central Government and was not properly discharged by that Government. How could a deficit province pool its resources and try and combat a huge famine which had engulfed it? Very few resources were at the command of the provinces. As I have already said, the production in the country was not enough. Take the case of Bengal. As we know, Bengal had lost its source of supply, a very substantial source, ever since Burma was occupied by the enemy. Then again, there was the cyclone. Floods and inundations worked havoc with the crops in the country. Then how was Bengal in a position to meet the needs of the situation without any help from outside? And for any help to come from outside, it was the Centre which had the authority and power to provide facilities. And from all the reports that we have seen in the papers we find that the Central Government, even though at a late hour it realised the seriousness of the situation, did not do its job quite properly, could not go about it in the right manner. There was vacillation, indecision, weakness, want of foresight, on the part of the Central Government. There were control conferences, and there were food conferences, and the result was that every conference went back upon the recommendations of the previous conferences, and the Government, in its vacillation, tried to implement the report of every conference, feeling that the public would be satisfied if only the view of the conference was implemented. The Government should have taken a longer view of things. It should have had a much broader outlook. Government might have been under the impression that the confidence of the people could be secured if only the recommendations of these various conferences were given effect to. But at the same time they should have realised that, after all, once the confidence of the people was secured, the co-operation of the country would result. They should have had an eye to the result, not to the securing of confidence of the people momentarily. If they had only taken a serious view of the situation earlier, it would have been possible for them to make provision for this emergency and to mitigate the effect of the disaster to a great extent.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Please close your remarks now.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR: Just one word about the Grow More Food Campaign. When was this campaign launched? Only a year and a few months ago. Even then nothing was seriously done which was really calculated to help the country to have more food at its disposal. One thing that should have been done by the Government was to see that the agriculturist had the implements to till his soil in order to be in a position to grow more food. Has there been enough supply of improved seeds? Has there been enough supply of farming implements to the agriculturist? Merely posting of placards asking the agriculturist to grow more food would never work. Nobody imagined that these placards and exhortations to the people would work the miracle.

I sound a note of warning, while I am on the subject, that the Government cannot take things so easily as it has been doing so far. Of course I do not say that the Government has not made any efforts to tackle the situation. It did make efforts but began to do so only at a very late hour. Even after it did so, it did not go about its business in the right manner; it allowed many things to drift on account of its indecision, on account of its vacillation and lack of a broader outlook. I must bring to the notice of the Government the fact that, after all, this food question

which is being discussed here is a question which is not only of vital importance for the present but it is going to be a question of great importance for years to come. A number of my Honourable friends have quoted many authorities about it. I would just draw attention to a statement made by Mr. Henry Wallace, the United States Vice-President, who is of opinion that in 1944 food will be the toughest of world problems. He also quotes facts to show how from 1918 to 1924 there were more lives lost in Europe than during the last war, and that one of the main reasons for the loss of life was the shortage of food. He also quotes facts and figures to show how it was this want of food, the presence of hungry people in Europe, that was responsible for installing Hitlerism, Socialism, Fascism and all kinds of "isms" in Europe. It is therefore necessary for us to take a lesson from what had happened in Europe. We should take steps in time in order that such a thing many not recur.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You have exceeded your time limit. Please conclude now.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR: Many speakers before me have been given a very large latitude, Sir, and I do not want a larger latitude than that which you have allowed them.

Now we are glad that relief has at last come. But it has come, after thousands and lakhs of lives had been lost, after so many families had been deprived of all that they had, and after thousands of children had been orphaned and thousands of women had been widowed. It has come, but at a very late hour. But I am glad that even at this late hour it has come. But it is not through the agency which has been working all along to fight the famine. It has come through another agency —through an individual who has shown the courage of his convictions. Whatever might be the verdict of history, when His Excellency Lord Wavell lays down the reins of office, at least this one thing which he did will stand out always to his credit, that like the great soldier that he was, he at once knew how to fight the demon of famine and with what weapons.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: All that has been said two or three times during this debate.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR: May be, Sir, but what I want to say, I must say also.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: But you cannot say that all the time. Your time is up. You can only say with my permission.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR: If you will only give me 5 minutes more, Sir——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I have already given you 7 minutes over your time.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR: I just want to say that he realised the defect in the armoury with which the civil administration was fighting this enemy. He realised that the civil administration was handicapped or hampered by red tapism and like a great soldier that he was, he tore away the meshes of red tapism and at once provided that help which was so immediately needed. I therefore ask the civil administration to take a lesson from this, namely, not to be bound by rules and regulations, not be bound by precedent, but to judge the situation on its merits and act accordingly. This is the advice which we have given in this House on a number of occasions, namely, that the Government should cast to the winds all its red tapism and should realise the necessity and the urgency of the food problem and do things promptly, and having come to a decision must implement that decision relentlessly, ruthlessly and immediately.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: You want military rule in Bengal.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Honourable Members, I am glad that the decision I arrived at this morning has enabled 15 Honourable Members of the House to address the Council today. The Council is now adjourned till Tuesday the 23rd November.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday the 23rd November, 1943.

COUNCIL OF STATE.

Tuesday, 23rd November, 1943.

The Council met in the Council Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

OPINION OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA REGARDING THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE JURISDICTION OF THE FEDERAL COURT.

126. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Has the attention of Government been drawn to the following expression of opinion of Sir Patrick Spens, Chief Justice of the Federal Court of India, at a party given to him in Madras, about the last week of September, 1943, that " it was absolutely inevitable that the Federal Court should become the supreme court of India, and that the sooner the Central Legislature in India was given the powers to form the court the better it would be for all concerned " ? Do Government propose to take steps in the direction suggested so that the Federal Court in India should develop into a general Court of Appeal from the High Courts in India ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. SHAVAX. A. LAL : Government have seen press reports of the observations of the Honourable the Chief Justice. On the second part of the question I have nothing to add to my reply to the Honourable Member's question No. 29 asked on the 17th November, 1943.

NUMBER OF DEATHS FROM STARVATION IN BENGAL.

127. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Do Government keep in touch with the famine situation in Bengal, and, if so, will they state the approximate total number of deaths from starvation in Bengal, and Calcutta, up to date ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : (*a*) The Government of India are keeping themselves in close and continuous touch with the situation in Bengal, both through the Provincial Government and through the Regional Commissioner (Food).

(*b*) A statement is laid on the table showing the total number of deaths reported in Calcutta, week by week from the beginning of this year till 30th October, 1943. No information is available as to what proportion of these deaths is directly or indirectly attributable to starvation. No accurate information regarding deaths in the different districts in Bengal outside Calcutta is available with the Government of India.

Statement showing Weekly Total Mortality occurring in Calcutta during 1943.

Week ending.	1943.	Week ending.	1943.
2-1-43	571	29-5-43	567
9-1-43	534	5-6-43	496
16-1-43	446	12-6-43	540
23-1-43	488	19-6-43	400
30-1-43	458	26-6-43	621
6-2-43	518	3-7-43	684
13-2-43	548	10-7-43	769
20-2-43	475	17-7-43	757
27-2-43	490	24-7-43	952
6-3-43	532	31-7-43	891
13-3-43	461	7-8-43	939
20-3-43	519	14-8-43	1,057
27-3-43	451	21-8-43	1,129
3-4-43	473	28-8-43	1,159
10-4-43	442	4-9-43	1,183
17-4-43	470	11-9-43	1,292
24-4-43	501	18-9-43	1,319
1-5-43	560	25-9-43	1,492
8-5-43	483	2-10-43	1,636
15-5-43	524	9-10-43	1,967
22-5-43	459	16-10-43	2,154
		23-10-43	2,155
		30-10-43	2,214

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Is it a fact that the Food Member stated in the Legislative Assembly in the course of the food debate there that the total number of deaths in Bengal up to the present time had been in the neighbourhood of 58,000 ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : Yes, Sir, he stated that that was the figure but he also stated that he held no brief for the accuracy of these figures. These figures had been collected by the district officers and were very approximate.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Are these the figures relating to the whole of Bengal or certain selected districts for which the Government of India wanted statistics ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : The whole of Bengal outside Calcutta.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : They are fantastically wrong then.

POSITION OF SUKKUR BARRAGE DEBT.

128. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : (*a*) Will Government make a statement indicating the position of the Sukkur Barrage debt, and the way in which the Sind Government proposes to repay it to the Central Government ?

(*b*) Is it a fact that this debt amounts to about Rs. 24 crores ? What is the amount of interest per year and how many instalments of what amounts have been paid by the Sind Government ?

(*c*) What part, if any, the subvention is likely to play in relation to the repayment of the debt ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES : (*a*) I would invite the attention of the Honourable Member to the replies given on this subject to his questions No. 297 on the 7th April, 1938 and No. 172 on the 18th November, 1941.

A statement showing the repayments of capital and interest to date is laid on the table.

(*b*) From this statement it will be seen that the balance of debt outstanding as on the 31st of March, 1943 was in the neighbourhood of Rs. 21 crores.

Interest at 4½ per cent. per annum is payable on the amount of capital outstanding from time to time. The amounts of interest so far paid will be seen in the statement.

(*c*) The subventions prescribed for certain Provinces including Sind, in the Schedule to the Government of India (Distribution of Revenues) Order, 1936, were determined on the principle that it was necessary to start the Provinces on an even keel and to equip them so as to enjoy a reasonable prospect of maintaining financial equilibrium. In the case of Sind, when considering the probable revenue balances of the Province from year to year, it was of course necessary, *inter alia*, to take into account the estimated excess of the net receipts from the Barrage over the amounts of capital repayment and interest charges of the Barrage debt each year under the repayment scheme. In this connection I would draw the attention of the Honourable Member to paragraphs 3 and 13 of the Report of the Financial Enquiry by Sir Otto Niemeyer.

LLOYD BARRAGE DEBT.

Repayments of capital and payment of interest.

(In lakhs of rupees.)

Year.	Opening balance.	Capital repaid during the year.	Interest paid during the year.
1936-37	2533·62	32·10	118·56
1937-38	2501·52	16·43	116·71
1938-39	2485·09	3·87	115·78
1939-40	2481·22	35·19	115·72
1940-41	2446·03	88·30	113·89
1941-42	2357·73	112·73	107·89
1942-43	2245·00	130·00*	97·87
Total up to 1942-43		418·62	786·42
Balance of debt on 1st April, 1942 = 21,15 lakhs.			
1943-44	2115·00	75·00†	97·65‡
Estimated balance of debt as on 1st April, 1944 = 20,40 lakhs.			

* Includes the first fixed instalment under the repayment scheme—75 lakhs and a special pre-payment of 55 lakhs.

† Payment of the second instalment of Rs. 75 lakhs was made in April, 1943.

‡ Budget estimate for 1943-44.

PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF A HIGH COMMISSIONER OF AUSTRALIA IN INDIA.

129. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Is it a fact that Australia proposes to appoint a High Commissioner to India ? If so, is there any High Commissioner to Australia, appointed by India ? If not, is it proposed to make such an appointment and to consider the appointment of a suitable Indian to the post ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI : Yes, the Australian Government have decided to appoint a High Commissioner in India. There is at present no High Commissioner for India in Australia, but the question of appointing one is under Government's consideration ; and the possibility of selecting a suitable Indian for the post will be considered.

REPRESENTATION OF INDIA IN THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF WAR CRIMES.

130. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Is it a fact that among other allied countries India was also represented at a meeting which was held at the Foreign Office, London, on the 20th October, 1943, the Lord Chancellor Presiding to make final arrangements for establishing forthwith in London, a United Nations Commission for the investigation of war crimes and criminals ? If so, who represented India and by whom will India be in future represented on such a Commission ?

THE HONOURABLE MR.E. CONRAN-SMITH (On behalf of Defence Department): With your permission, Sir, I will reply to this question and question No. 141 on behalf of the Honourable the Defence Member. It was agreed that India should be represented by the Secretary of State and the High Commissioner for India, but we have not yet received information as to who actually attended the meeting.

PROFITS MADE BY VARIOUS PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS BY SELLING FOODGRAINS.

131. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : (*a*) Will Government state whether it is a fact as stated by Sardar Baldev Singh, Development Minister, Punjab Government, in course of his statement that while the Punjab Government made no profit in the sale or export of its wheat, rice, or any other agricultural product, " the United Provinces, Sind and Bengal did make profits with the full knowledge of the Government of India, and despite protests from other provinces even the Government of India made a profit of about one rupee per maund on wheat purchased on its behalf in the Punjab, and sold to deficit Provinces " (*vide* the " Pioneer ", dated the 26th October, 1943) ?

(*b*) If so, will Government state the circumstances relating to the profits made by them or with their full knowledge as stated in the quotation given above ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : (*a*) and (*b*) The facts are as follows :—

The Sind Government has controlled prices within the Province at a figure which gives the producer a comparatively low return. In order to enable the Province to plan for the future welfare of the producer and in consideration of their successful price control, the Government of India have agreed that, pending the establishment of regional price parities all over India, they may charge for their exports, prices higher than the controlled prices in Sind. As regards the United Provinces, enquiry has revealed that the allegation was incorrect. In fact the prices charged by the United Provinces vary between Rs. 14-10-0 and Rs. 15-4-0 per maund, including bags f. o. r. station of despatch and the United Provinces Government have stated that there is no element of profit in these prices.

The results of the enquiry made from Bengal are contained in the Press Note of the 9th October, a copy of which is placed on the table.

So far as the profit alleged to have been made by the Government of India is concerned, the facts are as follows. The pooled price for the first 81,500 tons of wheat purchased by the Government of India from the Punjab for supply to deficit areas worked out at Rs. 11-6-1 per maund. To this was added an element to cover the commission to be paid to purchasing agents, the cost of administration of the Central Government and the Supplying administration and a margin to cover small fluctuations. The pool price was, therefore, fixed at Rs. 11-10-0 a maund, but an undertaking was given in clear terms to all Governments that should this price result in a

profit to the Central Government as a result of later purchases being at a lower price the profit would be returned to the deficit areas. In pursuance of this undertaking a preliminary refund of 0-11-0 a maund has already been ordered to be made to the Governments supplied by the Central Government.

PRESS NOTE.

WHEAT PRICES IN BENGAL.

Central Government explains position.

The attention of the Government of India has been drawn to the anxiety prevailing in the two main wheat exporting provinces lest the Government of Bengal may have derived, or should henceforth derive, an undue addition to Provincial Revenues from the sale of wheat exported or to be exported from those provinces to Bengal under arrangements made by the Government of India. The Government of India have accordingly obtained from the Government of Bengal a statement of position which is as follows :—

2. All wheat imported from other provinces under arrangements made by the Government of India is held in Government custody. Since the first of May last wheat is being sold to mills at a fixed price. Consignments received prior to that date were made over to the mills direct at cost price. The mills are allowed to sell their wheat products at ex-mill prices fixed under the Defence of India Rules corresponding to the retail rates for such products which are also fixed statutorily. The schedule of rates in force from the first May is as follows :—

Period.	Rate for sales of wheat to mills.	Ex-mill prices atta and flour respectively.	Retail prices atta and flour respectively.
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
1st May to 1st August . .	15 8 0 per md.	19 0 0 per md.	20 0 0 per md.
		19 0 0 ,,	20 0 0 ,,
1st August to 20th September .	14 4 0 ,,	16 8 0 ,,	17 8 0 ,,
		19 0 0 ,,	20 0 0 ,,
20th September onward . . .	12 12 0 ,,	14 0 0 ,,	15 0 0 ,,
		19 0 0 ,,	20 0 0 ,,

3. During the four months May to August 1943 inclusive the Bengal Government have derived a gross revenue of Rs. 33·44 lakhs on a turn-over of 19·84 lakhs maunds of imported wheat. This has been derived solely from sales of wheat to mills. The Bengal Government are not concerned in any of the subsequent transactions. In considering this revenue figure it has to be conceded that the Government of Bengal fixed their selling prices of wheat to the mills having regard to a number of estimated charges for handling, storage, delivery, etc., which in view of the poor deliveries of wheat in most of the months in question were never actually incurred. It will be noticed that the Government of Bengal effected a reduction of Rs. 1-4-0 per maund in their sale price of wheat with effect from the first August when it became apparent that receipts were accumulating. The price now in force is Rs. 12-12-0 Per maund which, regard being had to the F. O. R. prices current in the Punjab and the United Provinces respectively, will represent an actual loss to the Bengal Government. On the footing that the quantities still due under the Basic Plan are exported to Bengal in an even monthly flow, it is estimated that the Bengal Government's loss on sales of imported wheat to mills over the remaining period of the revised Basic Plan will amount to Rs. 40·3 lakhs which after deducting the accumulated revenue of Rs. 33·44 lakhs will leave a net loss to the Bengal Government of Rs. 6·86 lakhs. The Government of India are satisfied that the selling price of wheat now fixed by the Government of Bengal is reasonable.

4. As regards the "Milling Differential" allowed to the mills the Government of India have decided that the question should be gone into by the Regional Commissioner, Eastern Region, Mr. Justice Braund, with the aid of a Cost Accounts Officer of the Government of India, with a view to ascertaining whether the "Differential" allowed to the mills, and the consequential retail prices to the public are reasonable.

5. The above calculations do not include imported wheat products, which the Government of Bengal have been selling at the statutory prices fixed for ex-mill sales detailed in paragraph 2. The gross revenue received by the Government of Bengal on resales of imported wheat products up to the end of August 1943 amounts to Rs. 6·32 lakhs. In regard to this revenue, it would be undesirable and unworkable in practice to fix different sets of wholesale and retail prices for local and imported wheat products. The question of wiping out the accumulated revenue on wheat products is, however, under the active consideration of the Government of Bengal.

FOOD DEPARTMENT,
New Delhi, October 9, 1943.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Is it a fact that the Sind Government has the intention of raising the wheat prices internally and that the Government of India wants to stop them from doing so ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : Sir, there is a certain attempt in Sind to give up the present control of price, but a direction has been issued by the Government of India under section 126A not to give up the statutory control of price without reference to the Government of India.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Is it only that they should not give it up or they have been debarred from raising or lowering prices for internal purchase?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: We want that the present prices should be maintained.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will the Honourable Member give the reason for maintaining the prices fixed last year when the prices of all the necessities have gone up?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: We have been assured by the Sind Government that the prices fixed by them were the right prices for the cultivators.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Was that assurance given beforehand, a year back, and have they not claimed that the prices have gone further up and therefore there should be a rise in prices?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: We have not received any such claim from the Sind Government.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: About the United Provinces the Government's reply given the other day indicated that the Government purchased oil seeds at Rs. 12 and sold at Rs. 14. It was stated in this House in reply to a question from the Honourable Raja Yuveraj Dutta Singh or the Honourable Pandit Kunzru, and the Honourable Member just now said that the United Provinces Government was not making profits.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Please put a straight question.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Is the Government aware that the Government is buying oil seeds at Rs. 12 and selling them at Rs. 14 to the exporters from the United Provinces?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: This question refers to foodgrains. So far as foodgrains are concerned the Government of the United Provinces purchased at different prices at different times and they are selling to the deficit provinces at a pool price. They have assured us that in selling to the deficit provinces at a pool price they are not making any profit.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Are oil seeds included in foodgrains?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: No, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: May I draw the Honourable Member's attention to the fact that the question does not relate merely to foodgrains but to wheat, rice and other agricultural products?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: So far as the Food Department are concerned they are interested in the price of foodgrains at the present moment.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Are *ghee* and oil outside your purview?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: *Ghee* is within the purview of the Food Department but I understood this question to refer only to foodgrains.

INDIAN SETTLERS IN MAURITIUS.

132. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Is it a fact that there are about 281,000 Indian settlers in Mauritius, and they form 75 per cent of the total population?

(*b*) What steps have Government taken to secure for them equality of status, franchise and economic and political rights with the rest of the population and with what effect?

(*c*) Have Government made any enquiry into the alarming allegation contained in a cable despatched from Port Lowis, dated the 15th October, 1943, and published in the press "that Police shot four Indians comprising a woman, and lads"?

(*d*) What are the facts of this case and what steps have been taken by Government in this matter?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN: (*a*) In 1938 the estimated Indian population in Mauritius was 269,885, *i.e.*, about 66 per cent. of the total population.

(*b*) The Indians in the Colony have the same economic and political rights as other members of the general population and there is no discrimination against them.

(c) and (d) I have received a telegraphic report that disturbances occurred on 4 estates pending the settlement of a demand for higher wages. The police are reported to have been assaulted and in the course of firing which followed, 3 persons were killed and 3 wounded. A Commission of Enquiry is investigating the causes of the outbreak and Conciliation and Wages Boards are examining the adjustment of wages. Further details are on their way and after receiving them I shall consider what further action, if any, is required.

INDIA'S REPRESENTATIVE AT MOSCOW.

133. THE HONOURABLE MR. NARAYANDAS GIRDHARDAS: Is the Government of India represented in diplomacy at Moscow? (b) If so, what is the name of India's representative at Moscow? If not, do Government propose to secure their representation?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: (a) and (b) Neither Government has yet found that its affairs in the territory of the other were sufficiently extensive to warrant a proposal for the exchange of representatives.

PRESENTATION OF A TOKEN OF APPRECIATION TO M. STALIN ON BEHALF OF INDIA.

134. THE HONOURABLE MR. NARAYANDAS GIRDHARDAS: Do the Government of India contemplate the presentation of a token of appreciation and admiration, emulating the illustrious example of the United Kingdom which sent a sword to M. Stalin, the Marshal of the U. S. S. R., of its prowess against German hordes?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: The Honourable Member presumably refers to the "Sword of Honour" which is being presented by His Majesty the King Emperor to Marshal Stalin for the City of Stalingrad as a token of admiration for the heroic defence of that City by its inhabitants and the Russian Army. The Government of India whole-heartedly associate themselves with the admiration and appreciation expressed by the Honourable Member but in view of His Majesty's presentation regard the presentation of a separate token from India as inappropriate.

INDIA'S TRADE WITH U. S. S. R. THROUGH THE UNITED KINGDOM COMMERCIAL CORPORATION.

135. THE HONOURABLE MR. NARAYANDAS GIRDHARDAS: What is India's trade, by categories, volume and value, through the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation, with the U. S. S. R., up to date?

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: Supplies valued at about eight crores of rupees have been despatched so far by the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation from India to Russia. Of this total, more than half is accounted for by jute and jute goods. Other commodities despatched by the Corporation to Russia are mainly shellac, tea, canvas, rope and spices. I regret that I am not in a position to disclose detailed figures for each commodity.

MANUFACTURE OF CARGO PLANES IN INDIA.

136. THE HONOURABLE MR. NARAYANDAS GIRDHARDAS: (a) Do the Government of India propose to start the manufacture of cargo planes within the country for use of the offensive and for the duration of the war?

(b) If not, what are the insuperable difficulties in the way?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: (a) and (b) So far as the Fighting Services are concerned it has been found easier and more economical to import such freight carrying aircraft as are required from countries where they are already in production in large quantities. The question of manufacture in India for military purposes has not therefore arisen.

EFFECT ON INDIA'S STERLING BALANCES ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOUTH EAST ASIA COMMAND.

137. THE HONOURABLE MR. NARAYANDAS GIRDHARDAS: Will Government state whether the establishment of the South East Asia Command, in defence of India, under Lord Louis Mountbatten, demolish India's sterling balances in entire, or in part?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES: The answer is in the negative.

PROSPECT OF INDIA BECOMING A DEBTOR COUNTRY.

138. THE HONOURABLE MR. NARAYANDAS GIRDHARDAS : Is there any prospect of India becoming a debtor country again as a result of financing the South East Asia Command ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES : The answer is in the negative.

AMENDMENT OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1935 TO TAKE AWAY FOOD, CLOTHING, ETC., FROM THE PURVIEW OF PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY.

139. THE HONOURABLE MR. NARAYANDAS GIRDHARDAS : Have the Government of India any intention of making a proposal for amending the Government of India Act of 1935, so as to take away food, clothing and housing from the purview of provincial autonomy ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN : No, Sir.

SHARING OF ALL COLLECTION OF TAXES BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WITH PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS.

140. THE HONOURABLE MR. NARAYANDAS GIRDHARDAS : Do the Government of India propose to go into shares with the provinces in collections of all taxes, as in the case of the income-tax ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. C. E. JONES : I would invite the Honourble Member to refer to the Government of India Act, 1935 and the Government of India (Distribution of Revenues) Order, 1936, which govern the distribution of revenues between the Government of India and the Provincial Governments.

NUMBER AND VALUE OF CONTRACTS GIVEN TO INDIAN AND EUROPEAN FIRMS BY THE SUPPLY DEPARTMENT.

141. THE HONOURABLE MR. NARAYANDAS GIRDHARDAS : Will Government state how many contracts from the Supply Department of the Government have been given to Indians or Indian firms and how many to Europeans or European firms, and their values ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH (Secretary, Home Department, on behalf of Supply Department) : The total number of contracts placed by the Supply Department runs into thousands, and it would take some considerable time to work out the correct figures. Statistics of value of contracts, each of Rupees one lakh or over, are maintained under the heads ' Indian firms ' and ' Non-Indian firms '. During the 12 months October, 1942 to September, 1943, the total value of contracts of Rupees one lakh and over placed by the Supply Department was approximately Rs. 115·55 crores, Rs. 65·17 crores with Indian firms and Rs. 50·38 crores with Non-Indian firms.

DECISION OF FOOD CONFERENCE HELD IN BENGAL UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY.

142. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH. KUNZRU : (*a*) With reference to the third item in the programme adopted for immediate execution in Bengal at a Food Conference held in Calcutta on the 28th October, 1943, over which H. E. the Viceroy presided, will Government state what are the ' resources of the Army ' which will be made ' available to the maximum possible extent in the districts worst affected ' and what are the districts in which they will be made available ?

(*b*) To what extent will the Army authorities make the foodgrains stored by them for the army available for the use of the starving civil population ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : (*a*) The Army have lent the services of Major-General Wakely and certain other military officers to assist the Bengal Government in organizing and controlling the movement of foodstuffs from Calcutta and other main centres to distribution points in rural districts. A large number of troops, medical and supply personnel and military transport have been made available for rendering assistance to the civil officers in the affected area. The tasks involved are the carriage, escorting, loading and unloading of food supplies within the various districts ; provision of supply personnel for supply duties at distribution points ; medical relief for sick persons and hygiene, building of shelters for destitute persons, etc. Actual numbers of troops, etc., involved cannot be given for military reasons. They will work, for the present, in the civil districts of Hoogly, Midnapore, Howrah

24 Parganas, Khulna, Bakarganj, Faridpur, Dacca, Mymensingh, Pabna, Tippera, Noakhali, Chittagong.

(*b*) The Army are not providing foodgrains for the civil population from their own resources, they are only providing personnel and vehicles. They are, however, feeding labour in Bengal with 5,000 tons of rice a month which, normally, would be a civil liability.

STORES MADE AVAILABLE TO CIVIL AUTHORITIES BY THE MILITARY.

143. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: (*a*) Did the Secretary of State for India state in the debate on the Indian food situation in the House of Commons on November, 4, 1943, that the Army "on General Auchinleck's initiative has already placed considerable quantities of stores at the disposal of the civil authorties"? If so, what are the stores referred to by him and what is the quantity of those stores and the milk products made available to the civil authorities?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Yes. One million Compound Vitamin Tablets and 200 tons of condensed milk. Besides that, the medical units provided by the Army for helping the affected areas use medical supplies drawn from Army stocks.

ALLEGATIONS MADE BY THE DEVELOPMENT MINISTER, PUNJAB, REGARDING PROFITEERING IN THE SALE OF FOODGRAINS.

144. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: (*a*) Are Government aware that the Minister of Development in the Punjab said in the course of a statement issued to the A. P. I. on the 24th October "The Punjab Government made no profit on the sale or export of its wheat to the centre or deficit provinces while the U. P., Sind and Bengal did make profits with the full knowledge of the Government of India and despite protests from other provinces"? Is this true? If so, what are the rates at which these provinces are buying foodgrains and selling them to the deficit provinces? What is the total profit made by each of them so far?

(*b*) Are Government further aware that the Minister also said in the course of his statement "Even the Government of India made a profit of about one rupee per maund on wheat purchased on its behalf in the Punjab and sold to deficit provinces, the average price paid by the Government of India being Rs. 10-10-0 and the pool price charged by them being Rs. 11-10-0 per maund. The question of a pool price does not arise. For virtually—not entirely—all the purchases of the Government of India were made in the single province—Punjab?" Is this a fact? If so, why are the Government of India charging a price higher than the purchase price to the deficit provinces and what is the profit made by them up to the present time? If the allegation is not true, will Government state what the facts are?

(*c*) Did the above-mentioned Minister say in the same statement while refuting the charge of greed or selfishness against the Punjab Government "The Director of Food Supplies, Punjab, refused the offer of Rs. 28 per maund for 1,50,000 maunds of rice made by official agency on behalf of two firms in Bengal as the price fixed in the Punjab at the time was Rs. 17 per maund"? Is the allegation true? If so, who was the officer who made an enquiry on behalf of the private firms and what are the names of these firms. Has any action been taken against the official concerned and have any steps been taken to prevent the repetition of such conduct on the part of any official?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: (*a*) The Government of India are aware of the statement issued by the Honourable Minister of Development in the Punjab.

The Sind Government have controlled prices within the Province at a figure which gives the producer a comparatively low return. In order to enable the Province to plan for the future welfare of the producer and, in consideration of their successful price control, the Government of India have agreed that, pending the establishment of regional price parities all over India, they may charge for their exports of wheat and rice prices higher than the controlled prices in Sind. The controlled prices of foodgrains in the primary producing areas of Sind are Rs. 7 per maund for wheat and gram; Rs. 5-4-0 for Barley and Bajra; Rs. 4-12-0 for Jowar; and Rs. 5-8-0 and Rs. 8-8-0 for medium and superior paddy respectively. The export prices charged by Sind for these foodgrains are approximately those ruling in the Punjab for them. The total profit made by the Sind Government is not known.

As regards United Provinces, enquiry has revealed that the allegation is incorrect.

The results of the enquiry made from Bengal are contained in the Press Note of the 9th October, a copy of which is placed on the table. Attention is also invited to the Government of India's Resolution of the 2nd of November, 1943, setting up a Committee of enquiry consisting of (1) Honourable Mr. Justice H. B. L. Braund, Regional Food Commissioner, Eastern Region, and (2) Mr. A. L. Cooke, Chief Cost Accounts Officer, Supply Finance Department. A copy of the Resolution is also placed on the table.

(*b*) So far as the profit alleged to have been made by the Government of India is concerned, the facts are as follows: The pooled price for the first 81,500 tons of wheat purchased by the Government of India from the Punjab for supply to deficit areas worked out at Rs. 11-6-1 per maund. To this was added an element to cover the commission to be paid to purchasing agents, the cost of administration of the Central Government and the Supplying administration and a margin to cover small fluctuations. The pool price was, therefore, fixed at Rs. 11-10-0 a maund, but an undertaking was given in clear terms to all Governments that should this price result in a profit to the Central Government as a result of later purchases being at a lower price, the profit would be returned to the deficit areas. In pursuance of this undertaking a preliminary refund of 0-11-0 a maund has already been ordered to be made to the Governments supplied by the Central Government.

(*c*) It is not correct that any such offer was made by an official agency. Certain private contracts had been made at approximately the price mentioned for the supply of rice from the Punjab to Bengal, but since inter-provincial movements of foodgrains could only be permitted on Government account, the existence of these contracts was brought to the notice of the Punjab Government. That Government in the proper exercise of their discretion declined to allow the transactions to proceed.

PRESS NOTE.

WHEAT PRICES IN BENGAL.

Central Government explains position.

The attention of the Government of India has been drawn to the anxiety prevailing in the two main wheat exporting provinces lest the Government of Bengal may have derived, or should henceforth derive, an undue addition to Provincial Revenues from the sale of wheat exported or to be exported from these provinces to Bengal under arrangements made by the Government of India. The Government of India have accordingly obtained from the Government of Bengal a statement of position which is as follows:—

2. All wheat imported from other provinces under arrangements made by the Government of India is held in Government custody. Since the first of May last wheat is being sold to mills at a fixed price. Consignments received prior to that date were made over to the mills direct at cost price. The mills are allowed to sell their wheat products at ex-mill prices fixed under the Defence of India Rules corresponding to the retail rates for such products which are also fixed statutorily. The schedule of rates in force from the first May is as follows:—

Period.	Rate for sales of wheat to mills.	Ex-mill prices atta and flour respectively.	Retail prices atta and flour respectively.
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
1st May to 1st August . .	15 8 0 per md.	19 0 0 per md.	20 0 0 per md.
		19 0 0 ,,	20 0 0 ,,
1st August to 20th September .	14 4 0 ,,	16 8 0 ,,	17 8 0 ,,
		19 0 0 ,,	20 0 0 ,,
20th September onward . .	12 12 0 ,,	14 0 0 ,,	15 0 0 ,,
		19 0 0 ,,	20 0 0 ,,

3. During the four months May to August 1943 inclusive the Bengal Government have derived a gross revenue of Rs. 33·44 lakhs on a turn-over of 19·84 lakhs maunds of imported wheat. This has been derived solely from sales of wheat to mills. The Bengal Government are not concerned in any of the subsequent transactions. In considering this revenue figure it has to be conceded that the Government of Bengal fixed their selling prices of wheat to the mills having regard to a number of estimated charges for handling, storage, delivery, etc., which in view of the poor deliveries of wheat in most of the months in question were never actually incurred. It will be noticed that the Government of Bengal effected a reduction of Rs. 1-4-0

per maund in their sale price of wheat with effect from the 1st August when it became apparent that receipts were accumulating. The price now in force is Rs. 12-12-. per maund which, regard being had to the F. O. R. prices current in the Punjab and the United Provinces respectively, will represent an actual loss to the Bengal Government. On the footing that the quantities still due under the Basic Plan are exported to Bengal in an even monthly flow, it is estimated that the Bengal Government's loss on sales of imported wheat to mills over the remaining period of the revised Basic Plan will amount to Rs. 40·3 lakhs which after deducting the accumulated revenue of Rs. 33·44 lakhs will leave a net loss to the Bengal Government of Rs. 6·83 lakhs. The Government of India are satisfied that the selling price of wheat now fixed by the Government of Bengal is reasonable.

4. As regards the "Milling Differential" allowed to the mills the Government of India have decided that the question should be gone into by the Regional Commissioner, Eastern Region, Mr. Justice Braund, with the aid of a Cost Accounts Officer of the Government of India, with a view to ascertaining whether the "Differential" allowed to the mills, and the consequential retail prices to the public are reasonable.

5. The above calculations do not include imported wheat products, which the Government of Bengal have been selling at the statutory prices fixed for ex-mill sales detailed in paragraph 2. The gross revenue received by the Government of Bengal on resales of imported wheat products up to the end of August 1943 amounts to Rs. 6·32 lakhs. In regard to this revenue, it would be undesirable and unworkable in practice to fix different sets of wholesale and retail prices for local and imported wheat products. The question of wiping out the accumulated revenue on wheat products is, however, under the active consideration of the Government of Bengal.

FOOD DEPARTMENT.

New Delhi, October 9, 1943.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

DEPARTMENT OF FOOD.

RESOLUTION.

No. F. 10 (1)-Secy./43. *New Delhi, the 3rd November, 1943.*

The Government of India have had under consideration measures for ensuring that the retail cost of wheat and wheat-products sold to the public in Bengal is reasonable and that no undue element of profit is included in those prices. It has been recently announced publicly that the Government of Bengal have reduced their selling price of wheat to the millers by Rs. 1-4-0 and the Government of India are satisfied that the reduced selling price fixed by the Bengal Government of Rs. 12-12-0 per maund of wheat sold to the flour Mills in Calcutta is reasonable.

2. In order to satisfy themselves that there is no excessive element of profit in the prices charged for wheat-products at subsequent stages, the Government of India have decided to appoint a Committee of Inquiry, consisting of (1) Honourable Mr. Justice H. B. L. Braund, Bar.-at-Law, Regional Commissioner (Food), Eastern Region, and (2) Mr. A. L. Cooke, Chief Cost Accounts Officer, Supply Finance Department.

3. The terms of reference to the Committee are as follows :—

(I) To enquire—

(*a*) whether the profit accruing to the flour mills from the production and sale at the ex-mill statutory prices of wheat products made from wheat purchased from the Government of Bengal is reasonable, having regard to such variations in output and other conditions as may from time to time arise and, if not, what adjustment ought to be made so as to secure a reasonable rate of profit in the interest of the public and all parties concerned ;

(*b*) whether the profit accruing to retailers in the sale at the statutory retail prices of wheat products purchased from the mills is reasonable.

(II) To make recommendations as to the proportions in which atta, flour and bran should be produced by the mills in Calcutta out of wheat bought from Government, and the respective prices at which they should be sold to the public.

(Sd.) W. H. J. CHRISTIE,
Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : With regard to part (*a*) of the question, have the Government of India made any estimate of the profit earned by the Sind Government ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN : We have not got the figures here, but it is quite possible to get them if we get a little time.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : I would like to know what is the approximate profit made by the Sind Government on the sale of food-grains.

STATEMENT OF SHYAMA PROSAD MUKHERJEE REGARDING THE FREE CARRIAGE OF FOODGRAINS BY THE SCINDIA COMPANY.

145. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT. HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Has the attention of Government been drawn to the statement issued by Dr. Shyama Prosad Mukherjee regarding the steamer offered by the Scindia Company for the free carriage of food grains from Karachi to Calcutta and the action of the Sind Government in connection with it? Will Government state what the facts are and what action they took in the matter?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The Honourable Member is referred to the reply given on the 20th November, 1943, to question No. 111 by the Honourable Raja Yuveraj Dutta Singh.

PUBLICATION OF THE DIARY OF SRI S. SARMA AND PARTY, FOR THE PERIOD OF THEIR TOURS, ON BEHALF OF INDIA.

146. THE HONOURABLE MR. NARAYANDAS GIRDHARDAS: Will the Government of India publish the diary of Sri Srinivasa Sarma and party, for the period of their tours, on behalf of India? If so, will the publication be printed in book form?

The HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: Government have not yet considered the question but the Honourable Member's suggestion will be kept in view if it is decided to publish an account of the tours.

STATEMENTS, ETC. LAID ON THE TABLE.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH (Home Secretary): Sir, I lay on the table copies of the Declaration of Exemption under section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, as published with the Notifications of the Government of India in the Home Department——

(1) No. 1/10/43-Political (E), dated the 4th November, 1943;
(2) No. 1/51/43-Political (E), dated the 4th November, 1943;
(3) No. 1/52/43-Political (E), dated the 8th November, 1943.

No. 1/10/43-Political (E).
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.

Simla, the 4th November, 1943.

DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners shall not apply to or in relation to—

(1) Mr. HSI TE MOU, Director of the Banking Department of Central Bank of China at Calcutta for so long as he remains in his present post.
(2) Miss MAR YEE HOO, a Chinese national at Calcutta.

A. W. LOVATT,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 1/51/43-Political (E).
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.

Simla, the 4th November, 1943.

DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to, Mr. Charles P. Rockwood, Junior Assistant Representative of the Overseas Operations Branch of the United States Office of War Information for so long as he remains in that post.

A. W. LOVATT,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

No. 1/52/43-Political (E).
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.
HOME DEPARTMENT.

Simla, the 8th November, 1943.

DECLARATION OF EXEMPTION.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to,—

(1) WANG SHEH-CHIEH.
(2) Dr. HAU LI-WU.
(3) Dr. WEN YUANNING.
(4) Mr. WANG YUN-WU.
(5) Mr. HU LIN.
(6) Dr. LEE WEI KUO.

members of the Chinese Goodwill Mission.

A. W. LOVATT,
Under Secretary to the Government of India.

VICTORIA MEMORIAL (AMENDMENT) BILL.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH (Home Secretary) : Sir, I move :—

" That the Bill further to amend the Victoria Memorial Act, 1903, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be taken into consideration."

Sir, this is a very simple little Bill which need not take up the time of the House. It seeks to legalise the transaction of business by the Trustees by circulation, and enables them to dispense with an actual meeting. Sir, I move.

The Motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1 was added to the Bill.

The Title and Preamble were added to the Bill.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : Sir, I move :—

" That the Bill, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be passed."

The Motion was adopted.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AMENDMENT BILL.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SHAVAX A. LAL (Nominated Official) : Sir, I move :—

" That the Bill to make certain provision for appeals in criminal cases tried by a High Court exercising original criminal jurisdiction, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be taken into consideration."

Sir, this Bill is mainly of interest to the Presidency-towns of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. As Honourable Members might be aware, these High Courts exercise original criminal jurisdiction, and no appeal is now provided for from any judgment passed by any of these Courts in criminal cases. The Bill, at the instance of the Bombay High Court, now provides for appeals from the judgments of a High Court in the exercise of its criminal jurisdiction. Sir, I move.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS (Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, I welcome this Bill as providing a remedy both in the case of acquittals as well as convictions. It has been felt for a long time that there was no remedy, unless it be a very circuitous one of getting a certificate from the Advocate-General and then presenting it before the High Court and so on, for a person convicted on the Original Side of a High Court in criminal cases to appeal against the conviction. This Bill provides a very convenient as well as speedy remedy.

There are no doubt certain considerations which will weigh in the case of granting an appeal against a conviction. When the Bill was circulated, if you will pardon my blowing my own trumpet, I suggested that a similar provision should be made in the case of acquittals. In the case of acquittals there was no remedy at all. It was felt especially in Madras, that when questions affecting certain interests came up, there was invariably an acquittal. At least people thought so. I am not going to say

that the jury was corrupt or that they were influenced by class considerations. Anyhow it was felt in many cases there had been a serious miscarriage of justice because the jury took a strong view and there was no remedy at all against that. When the Bill was circulated, I suggested that a similar provision with regard to appeals against acquittals might be considered by the Government, and I am very glad to see that the Government have accepted the suggestion.

Sir, this is a very welcome provision. You will find that where questions of race or religion or things like that are concerned, the jury are apt to take a strong view, and there is a feeling that justice has failed. I am glad that this want of appeal in the case of acquittals is now going to be remedied, and I heartily welcome the Bill.

The Motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 to 8 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1 was added to the Bill.

The Title and Preamble were added to the Bill.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SHAVAX A. LAL : Sir, I move :—

"That the Bill, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be passed."

The Motion was adopted.

CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AMENDMENT BILL.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SHAVAX A. LAL : (Nominated Official) : Sir, I move :—

"That the Bill further to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be taken into consideration."

Sir, this Bill meets a difficulty which has long been felt in the execution of commissions issued by criminal courts for the examination of witnesses in Indian States. The objects of the Bill have been fully explained in the Statement of Objects and Reason and I have nothing to add to them. Sir, I move.

The Motion was adopted.

Clauses 2, 3 and 4 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1 was added to the Bill.

The Title and Preamble were added to the Bill.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SHAVAX A. LAL : Sir, I move :—

"That the Bill, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be passed."

The Motion was adopted.

CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (SECOND AMENDMENT) BILL.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SHAVAX A. LAL : (Nominated Official) : Sir, I move :—

"That the Bill further to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (*Second Amendment*) as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be taken into consideration."

Sir, this Bill has been suggested by the Punjab Government and its objects have been fully stated in the Statement of Objects and Reasons. It provides for certain eventualities in the case of soldiers who are on active service in regard to matrimonial offences. As the law stands at present, certain offences cannot be tried unless the aggrieved party lodges a complaint. The cases which the Bill has in mind are those in which it would not be possible for a man on active service to file the complaint required by the Criminal Procedure Code. This Bill aims at removing this difficulty. Sir, I move.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : (United Provinces Southern : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I have not been able to understand the exact scope of this Bill and the changes that it seeks to introduce in the present law. Under the present law the complaint can be made by a person who has care of such woman in the absence of the husband and with the leave of the Court. It appears to me that what is proposed to be done is that some other person authorised by the husband in accordance with the provisions of sub-section (*1*) of section 199B can, with the leave of the Court, make the complaint. Where does the difference between the present law and the law that is proposed lie ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. SHAVAX A. LAL : Sir, the law as it now stands says that a complaint in certain cases may be filed by a person other than the person

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

[Mr. Shavax A. Lal.]

aggrieved, but the categories of persons there mentioned do not govern the case of a person who may have the custody of the woman for the time being but whose interests may not be identical with those of the husband——

*THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : For example ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. SHAVAX A. LAL : I am not well versed in matrimonial offences. I do not know. There may be cases where the man who has custody of the woman may not have interests identical with those of the husband. He may not like to take any action while the husband, if he were here, would have taken action——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Or he may be in league with the respondent.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SHAVAX A. LAL : Or perhaps the man concerned may be the person who has the custody of the woman or, as the Honourable the President suggested, he may be in league with the offender and he may not like to lodge a complaint. In that case, if the husband had been present, he would have taken the initiative himself, but if he were on active service, the offence would go unpunished for want of a proper person to make the complaint. The law says that " where such person is under the age of eighteen years or is an idiot or lunatic, or is from sickness or infirmity unable to make a complaint, some other person may, with the leave of the Court, make a complaint on his or her behalf." Some other person may lodge a complaint if the person who ought to lodge the complaint is either an idiot or a lunatic or is suffering from sickness or infirmity and thus unable to make a complaint or is a minor. These conditions must be fulfilled before a person can lodge a complaint on behalf of the woman. But the case of the person on active service is not covered here, so that the mere fact that a person is on active service will not entitle any other person to lodge a complaint unless the law makes provision for this purpose. That is the reason why this Bill has been proposed.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Sir, I will not go into the general question as to whether any provision such as there exists in sections 494 and 498 is desirable. Obviously those sections are obsolete from the modern point of view because they assume that woman is a chattel and ——

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS : (Nominated Non-Official) : It is not a criminal offence in England.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : ——it is not a criminal offence in England and therefore it is not in keeping with the English law view on the subject. But, apart from that wider objection, I feel that by having a section like this in a country where the condition of woman is none too good, we shall be handing her over to the tender mercies of unscrupulous people who may start complaints against their supposed lovers. I am not very happy, therefore, with this Bill and therefore I shall not be prepared to support it myself.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : You do not suggest any alternative remedy.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : The alternative remedy is the long term remedy, namely, changes in the social organisation including divorce.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : That will take many years.

*THE HONOURABLE HAJI SYED MUHAMMAD HUSAIN : (United Provinces West : Muhammadan) : Sir, I think this amendment is necessary. If the law as it stands does not remedy a wrong, either it ought to be made complete or there should not be this law at all. My Honourable friend is not very happy in having a provision like this. But if you want to have it, you should make it cover all cases. Cases have happened when some people have gone overseas or are serving the the army and in their absence they have left their women in charge of her relations. Things have happened with the connivance of the relations of the woman. She was given to some other person. I know of a case where a woman was given for a consideration in the absence of the husband. Under section 494 none of the woman's relations would ever like that a case against her, where she could be convicted, should be brought before the Court.

The Motion was adopted.

Clauses 2, 3 and 4 were added to the Bill.

*Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.

Clause 1 was added to the Bill.

The Title and Preamble were added to the Bill.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SHAVAX A. LAL: Sir, I move:

"That the Bill, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be passed."

The Motion was adopted.

INDIAN TEA CONTROL (SECOND AMENDMENT) BILL.

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI (Commerce Secretary): Sir, I beg to move:—

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Tea Control Act, 1938, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be taken into consideration."

Sir, this is a simple measure designed to remove certain defects in the existing Act, as recently amended, which practical experience of the working of the Act has brought to light. In the first place, the Bill seeks to exempt from the export licensing procedure gift teas despatched to troops abroad by organisations other than Red Cross Societies. Secondly, it gives to the Central Government power to direct the Tea Licensing Committee to refuse special licences in certain cases—a power which they already enjoy with respect to ordinary licences. Thirdly, the Bill gives effect to the real intention underlying section 29 of the Act which as at present worded confines the concession of replacement planting to an unduly restricted class of beneficiaries. Lastly, Sir, the Bill completes the penal structure of the Act by prescribing a penalty for contravention of certain provisions of the Act for which no penalty now exists. All these matters appear to me to be of an entirely non-controversial character, and I do not wish to take up the time of the House by entering into them in greater detail. Sir, I move

The Motion was adopted.

Clauses 2, 3, 4, and 5 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1 was added to the Bill.

The Title and Preamble were added to the Bill.

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: Sir, I move:

"That the Bill, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be passed."

The Motion was adopted.

INDIAN COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI (Commerce Secretary): Sir, I beg to move:—

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Companies Act, 1913, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be taken into consideration."

It has long been the practice of banking companies, both in the United Kingdom and in this country, for sound business reasons, not to disclose information about bad and doubtful debts in regard to which adequate provision has been made to the satisfaction of their Auditors. Legal backing to this time-honoured practice was given in this country by a notification under section 151 of the Indian Companies Act, first issued in 1927 and renewed in 1937, which exempted banking companies from certain obligations imposed by the terms of Form F appended to the Act. A recent judgment of the Bombay High Court has however held that this notification is *ultra vires* of the Act, and this Bill is intended to rectify the position and to legalise past practice. Sir, I move.

The Motion was adopted.

Clauses 2, 3, 4, and 5 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1 was added to the Bill.

The Title and Preamble were added to the Bill.

THE HONOURABLE MR. N. R. PILLAI: Sir, I move:—

"That the Bill, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be passed."

The Motion was adopted.

MOTION *RE* FOOD SITUATION—*concld.*

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: This completes the legislative business for today. Now we will proceed with the discussion of the food question again.

THE HONOURABLE KUMAR NRIPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA (West Bengal : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, the Honourable Members who have spoken have exhausted all the points of debate ; so I confess, I cannot add anything new at this stage. Coming, as I do from Bengal, I cannot but add my feeble voice of protest and condemnation at the attitude and indifference of the Bengal Government, in tackling with the most serious economic problem of the country. The Government of Bengal, with a singular lack of imagination and foresight, should have perceived that with the fall of Burma, the import of rice from that country must automatically stop; and that Government ought to have taken timely steps to see that the stock should be replenished by import either from surplus provinces, or by import from abroad and by stoppage of exports of food stuffs from this country. But the Government of Bengal took no timely steps to move the Central Government in this behalf. On the other hand Mr. Suhrawardy, the Minister-in-charge openly declared that he had got sufficient stock in the province to tide over the situation, and needed no help from the Centre. The miscalculation of the Local Government has resulted in the loss of innumerable human lives besides intense suffering and destitution. Bengal, once the granary of India, has been reduced to a grave yard ; and people are clamouring for food which they do not get, and die of starvation. The Government of India also failed to realise their responsibility under the ample powers of superintendence, direction and control possessed by them under the constitution ; and to call the local Government to account. The Government of Bengal purchased grains from the Punjab ; and sold it at a big profit. This is admittedly taking mean advantage of the destitution and suffering of the people ; and they cannot escape the charge of corruption and gross mismanagement. The policy of the Government is, and had been, to rigidly exclude non-official Indians of foresight and influence, to assist them in the solution of difficult problems. The Railway Department concerned also could not cope with the transport situation, which arose out of the War. The transport difficulty must be overcome, and help must reach the most distant villages, where internal communication is next to nothing.

The suggestion is also worth-considering whether it would not be a good thing to make direct purchase at a reasonable price, and then offer the stock to the public for relief of distress. The agriculturists would thereby benefit by the exclusion of the middleman. But the obvious course did not occur to those in charge of the Bengal Government, and things were allowed to go from bad to worse. I am afraid the economic structure of Bengal has been shattered seriously ; and it will not be an easy task to restore normal conditions of things in the hapless Province of Bengal for years to come. The " Grow More Food " campaign should be intensified and waste land must be brought under the plough. All the necessary facilities of seeds, implements and bullocks must be afforded to the agriculturists on controlled prices. The average middle-class of persons have also suffered silently, without making their distress known to others. Sir, I regret to say that at this time, the Government is contemplating to impose the agricultural income tax in Bengal which will prove the proverbial last straw ; and I strongly advise the Central Government to intervene so that the Bengal Government may desist from such a course at least for the present. The people deserve all the help they can receive.

Sir, one other point which I will just refer to, is the question of the immense purchase by the military. I readily admit that the needs of the military must at the present time, take precedence over those, *e.g.*, the civil population ; but the disparity between them is truly amazing. The purchase of every thing for the military leaves almost nothing for the civil population ; and the resulting prices naturally go up high, which is beyond the capacity of the people. I would in this connection strongly suggest that the Allies whose troops are stationed in this country, should make their own arrangements for feeding them. With the security in the Mediterranean the shipping difficulties have been greatly minimised and therefore there ought to be no difficulty in transport of food stuffs. This, I understand, comes within the ambit of responsibility of His Majesty's Government ; and they must be charged with criminal negligence in not providing for shipping in sufficient dimensions. In the question of shipping also, the needs of the military over-shadow the picture. But here again I am constrained to say that the plight of Bengal and

elsewhere in India, had been over-looked. The inland transport difficulty is admittedly due to the presence of Allied troops in this country. India has become a centre of extreme strategic importance; and its problems must necessarily have to to be viewed from an international stand-point. India, at the present moment cannot be regarded as the domestic concern of England. Her importance and specially of Bengal has immensely risen in the military and strategic areas of operation. It is, no doubt, our duty to afford as much comfort to our troops, who are fighting for our liberty, and in the cause of civilization and independence. The ultimate solution of our economic problems eventually lie on the victory of the Allies; and the sooner we can hasten the day of victory, the sooner will come the day of our liberation and freedom. But the immediate problem, which covers the whole of India, is how to feed the population. It is a gigantic task, which baffles easy solution; but this is a task which Government cannot shirk; and the entire machinery of administration must be employed in saving human lives. Sir, I regret to have to say that His Excellency Lord Linlithgow, who was in charge of the Food Department for a certain period, did not move his little finger in saving the situation in Bengal or elsewhere. He did not think it worth his while to pay a visit to Bengal and carefully study the situation on the spot, and apply the appropriate remedy. Sir, I am glad to know however that His Excellency Lord Wavell has, with a truly remarkable fore-sight, and gift of imagination, has lost no time in proceeding to Bengal and arriving at quick dicisions. The non-official philanthropic agencies which are working at the present moment in relief of distress and suffering, deserve our grateful thanks; while I also express my gratitude to those Honourable Members, who have extended their sympathy to us in our hour of trial and distress, I also wish to thank the Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad and Mr. B. R. Sen for their efforts in trying to relieve the distressed people of Bengal. In the conclusion I would only like to add a word of caution to the officers of the Food Department of the Central and Provincial Governments. I understand they are seriously contemplating fixing the price of rice to Rs. 8 or Rs. 10 per maund in Bengal. This will certainly be a welcome reduction. But if the prices of the other most important commodities of life such as pulses, mustard oil, *ghee* and cloth, etc., are not controlled and brought down to a parity price, the controlling of the price of rice and paddy only will operate very harshly on the producers of the above grain.

The closing days of Lord Linlithgow's Viceroyalty in India have been clouded by the shadow of famine and pestilence in Bengal and in other areas in this country.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I told the Honourable Members yesterday and several times that it is not usual to refer to His Excellency the Viceroy in a debate.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa: Muhammadan): But he is no longer the Viceroy.

THE HONOURABLE KUMAR NRIPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA: Sir, I am glad to know however that His Excellency Lord Wavell, has, with a truly remarkable foresight and gift of imagination—

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern: Non-Muhammadan): You must not refer to the Viceroy. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot refer to the Viceroy by way of praise if you cannot refer to him by way of criticism.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You are quite right, but when the Honourable Members do not listen to me and make unparliamentary statements I am helpless. Honourable Members continue to make references in spite of my warning. Order, order, will you now proceed?

THE HONOURABLE KUMAR NRIPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA: We are also grateful to those countries and nations who have sent food and other necessaries in this hour of distress to the people of India.

*THE HONOURABLE CHAUDHRI ATAULLAH KHAN TARAR (East and West Punjab: Muhammadan): Mr. President and Members of the Council of State, all that I have gathered from the three or four days' discussions that have taken place on Food is that, generally, the members have put

12 NOON.

* Translation of speech delivered in Urdu.

[Ataullah Khan Tarar.]

the blame upon the Government of India and the Provincial Government for the famine in Bengal and other parts of India. But in my view this is not right. I think the real cause is the outbreak of the war. The food which used to be sent by foreign countries to India is now required by them as they are entangled in the war. Certain countries which are neutral in the war cannot send their food stocks because of the dangers that are present on the seas.

What is the position in our country ? We are also in the same position as the other countries which are entangled in the war. Food stocks are being sent to the war fronts—foodstocks which before the war were utilised in the country itself. Moreover, due to lack of transport facilities, which again is the result of this war because wagons cannot be spared, food stocks cannot be taken to the famine area without delay. Trains are utilised for military purposes.

Now, Sir, I ask those people who criticize the Government of India: suppose those members who are criticizing the Government are given a chance to sit on the official benches, let them manage the affairs of the famine area and look to the welfare of the people affected. Will they be able to do it ? They will certainly not succeed in maintaining order and bringing food stocks in such a short time as the present Government of India's officials are doing for the provinces which are suffering from famine.

I now come to the criticism of the Punjab Government. May I ask those Honourable Members who openly put the blame on the Punjab Government and hold it responsible for the outbreak of famine : which of the provinces supplied more food stocks than the Punjab and sold at a lower price ? The province of Punjab has helped Government by supplying the largest number of recruits. I ask you to point out a more popular and successful Government than that which is in power in the Punjab which, in peace time generally and in war time especially, helped the agriculturist in the cultivation of food by way of supplying more water, through reclamation, etc. The result of this help is seen in the large quantities of food stocks which are available. All this is due to the generous facilities given by the Punjab Government to their subjects, especially the agriculturists. The Punjab Government has also been helpful to all the inhabitants of the Punjab through passing certain useful Bills. And now, if in return for this service the agriculturists of the Punjab are obliged to sell their food stocks at low rates and their stocks are snatched away forcibly and control orders are issued, then it will be quite unjust, considering that the Punjab is the backbone of the Government of India and other countries as well.

Coming to the question of rationing, I invite the attention of those Honourable Members who wish to see rationing introduced, to the following points. Did they ever bring before the Legislature the suggestion that cloth, iron, wood, and other commodities which are important to the agriculturist should be rationed ? Did they raise the question of rationing commodities which are generally used by the public, especially those which are used by the agriculturists in growing more food ? They have never considered the fact that the prices of all other commodities are rising, and that they have risen so much as to affect the agricultural industry. The food stocks will sell dear, and there will be famine all over the country, and the people of Bengal and other affected provinces will die. On whom will the responsibility fall ? The farmer requires such things as wood, iron, seeds, bulls, and so on, the prices of which have increased very much. How, then, is it possible for the agriculturist to sell his food stocks at low prices ? It will be unjust to the agriculturist if prices of food stocks are controlled and those stocks are snatched away from him. I do not believe Government will do that.

If the question is of Government servants—that they will be in trouble if the prices of foodstuffs are increased—Government can grant allowances to cover the rise in prices. Moreover, Government servants used to enjoy the same rates of pay in peace time, and they can somehow or other pass the hard days of war ; the period of hardship will be very short and will end with our victory.

As regards rationing of foodstuffs, I think Government should not take this question into consideration. I could have understood if rationing had been applied to uch luxuries as suits and cinemas ; and I can understand petrol rationing. By

these methods Government can save some amount of money for the war. There are two kinds of people—the poor and the rich. The poor man requires five seers of foodgrains to feed his family, but he has to be satisfied with four seers. The rich man cannot take more foodgrains than he can eat; that is to say, if he takes half a seer daily for his meals, he cannot be wanting one seer. If he took one seer, he would die of cholera or indigestion. Therefore, the rich people who have a surplus of foodgrains will have to sell that surplus if they get a reasonable price and it reaches the place where it is needed. Therefore, I think there is no necessity of rationing of food.

If the Government of India, after hearing the opinion that I have expressed, still think of introducing rationing of foodgrains, they must first control the prices of all the consumer goods which are in common use by the public, especially by the agriculturists. But if the Government issues orders controlling the prices of foodgrains only, I honestly believe it is quite unjust and a blunder on the part of the Government. The agriculturists will die. The agriculturist is the soul of the Government. I think Government should never let the agriculturists die, when Government are waging a war for the maintenance of justice and peace in the world. I hope Government will not treat its subjects so harshly.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL (Bombay: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, the speaker who has preceded me has made an astounding speech. I am afraid he has no conception of what is the real situation in the country. There is no desire on the part of anybody to rob the cultivator. Rationing does not rob the cultivator. Rationing assures him a fair price. It also gives to the other sections of the community articles of food at a fair price. I am sure he does not know that although England is not an agricultural country, they still have some part of their land under agriculture and yet rationing has been introduced there and prices there are half of what they are in India or even less than that. I am sorry that such a speech should have been made. However, I think he stands isolated in his own view. I am not sure that it is the Punjab view. The tragedy that has overtaken many parts of Bengal is really too deep for words. The tale of death which commenced there a few months before is still continuing in its fury. This state of affairs has naturally caused resentment and anger in the country. I find the Government benches empty here as they were yesterday. If they are facing angry speeches in this House as they did in the other House, they should not be surprised. A country like India which is nearly self-sufficient, which grows as much as 97 per cent. of her food, is today having a situation in which thousands are dying, and have been dying for months, and Government are not in a position to say that they can stop this today or tomorrow or within a week. Is that a condition which you can bear with equanimity? No, Sir. The Government are really playing with this House. The Food Member was absent yesterday——

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA (Food Member): He is not a Member of this House.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Is he present here without being a Member of the House.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Yes, he is present without being a Member of the House.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: He is entitled to be present.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Well, Sir, what was done in England? England is a country which depends on imports for more than 75 per cent. of her foodstuffs. But in India where there is a shortage of only 3 per cent. you handed over her population to death and starvation. The Government of India have given to themselves a most indelible certificate of their incompetency to manage the affairs of this country. They have shown to the whole world that they are incapable of anticipating difficulties even of a small type as this. Only 3 per cent. of the food which used to come from Burma has not come and then there is nothing but famine. There are other causes but they are really insignificant. If they had the foresight that they had in England, they should have been in a position to bring enough imports into this country and there should not have been this crisis. I shall cite one instance of how this Government plays with this House. As soon as I read

[Mr. G. S. Motilal.]

about 6 weeks ago that the Foodgrains Policy Committee's Report was out, I sent an order to the Manager of the Publications Department asking him to send me a copy of that report. I received a reply after about two weeks and what was the reply ? It was, " Please write to the Secretary of the Committee ". I sent him a letter and I received his reply saying that it is on sale, and that I can order it out from the Publications Department. Then again I wrote to them but still I have not got a copy. I obtained one yesterday from a book shop. I walked into a book shop and I found it there and I purchased it. Was it the intention of Government that Members of the Legislature should not have that information before them for commenting upon it, in this session.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA : No.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : What was the intention ? Why was it not released earlier ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA : We shall explain later.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : I hope that a suitable explanation will come. But I want you to bear in mind that they said that it was on sale about a month ago. You must explain this point also that a responsible Secretary of your Department wrote that it was on sale and I can get it from the Publications Department, and yet it was not available, and when I wrote to the Manager of the Publications Department, he said it was under print, and as soon as ready it will be sent to me. Sir, I do not wish to repeat other arguments which have been advanced but, I shall deal with the Report. I purchased yesterday and I have time to touch only on certain points. On a situation like this the Government did not take the public into their confidence and that is why there is want of confidence. Lots of people have exaggerated and wrong notions of Government purchases and that also adds to the scare and hoarding. Lots of people that met me about a year ago told me that there are heavy army purchases and that was the reason why prices had gone up. It was my duty to contradict and I did contradict such statements. I said, " In your own interests, do not circulate these wrong impressions. If there are 10 or 20 lakhs of men in the army, they are men who were in this country ; they were eating their food ; they are probably eating a little more now and that would not bring this famine." Government have not discharged their duty so far. They say that statistics are very inadequate and unsatisfactory. We have been clamouring for satisfactory statistics to be obtained in this country. About 9 or 10 years ago two economists were imported from England as usual to make an inquiry into statistics in this country. They made their report. What has happened to that report ? No action worth the name has been taken and today the Foodgrains Committee complains that statistics are so very inadequate that you cannot rely upon them in any degree. Government should take a lesson from this tragedy and make every effort to allot a sufficient sum and equip the Department of Statistics. Then I come to page 2, Denial policy. In this report it is said that 40,000 tons of foodgrains, probably rice, was removed from certain parts of Bengal. It is not said from which parts of Bengal this rice was removed, and how it was removed. I want to know what is the authority for this figure of 40,000 tons. Was it purchased or carried away by the military ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Purchased.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : If it was purchased, then a certain amount of data for that information will be available. I should like to know from which part this rice was removed and what are the parts which are most affected by the present famine. We read in the newspapers now-a-days that so many deaths are taking place in Calcutta and people are coming away from various parts. But hardly do we know definitely from which parts people go down to Calcutta. Government say they have no information. It was Government's business to get the information. If they had only asked the people who had come there they would have been in a position to collect the information. If they do not collect, it is not enough to say that no information is available. They have themselves not done what they should have done. They have failed in doing their duty.

Now, I come to exports and imports figure. I should like to know wether these exports include exports on Government account or are they only on private account ? Generally in their statistics which Government publish they only give us figures of exports on private account and I am afraid these figures are only of private exports and imports. I would like a categorical reply from Government as to what were the exports on Government account. Had shipping been made available, imports would not have gone down as low as they did.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN (Nominated Official) : Is the Honourable Member referring to exports from the port of Calcutta ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : All-India. I am referring to page 29 of the Foodgrains Policy Committee's Report. Imports in the year 1940-41 when Burma was with us had gone down from 2,713,000 in the previous year and that was a war year to 1,054,000. This was probably due to want of shipping. But if Government had pressed for shipping, I am sure shipping would have been made available. It is a question of taking steps in time. Arrangements should have been made in time to make up for the deficiency due to the loss of Burma rice and the demand of India should have been pressed in time upon His Majesty's Government. That was not done adequately. If they had been importing food for their own purposes to such a large extent, they could not have refused India's request. Then, Sir, there is one paragraph which I should like to read from the report :

" We would preface our remarks by pointing out that in the present excited state of public opinion no useful purpose can possibly be served by implicit credence being given by commercial bodies or the Press to rumours and allegations which, on examination, are found to be either completely untrue or wild exaggerations of the facts. To indulge in these manifestations of feeling is as serious as to give credence to rumours regarding enemy activity. In this respect the public must keep its head. We urge, as equally important, and as the only effective way of preventing these rumours from obtaining large-scale acceptance, the utmost candour on the part of the Food Department."

I am in entire agreement with this remark. The Food Department must place all the information it can before the public ——

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Should it be controverted ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : If it is controverted, again facts which are correct facts should be placed before the public.

Sir, this Government had no definite policy until very recently. Various measures were taken. Sometimes they started with controlling, then decontrolling then re-controlling and they did not know in what articles they were going to have control. They should have some definite policy now. I hope they will now follow a definite and a consistent policy, a well thought out policy. Imports must be pressed for and you must press and get sufficient shipping space for your articles. The Committee has suggested that they should import only 1½ million tons. As far as it goes, it is all well and good. But I am not satisfied with this import. Thanks to Providence we have been having good seasons and good crops. But assuming that in any part of India there is famine, you will again be faced with the same trouble. I therefore suggest that you should be prepared to have 5 million tons of foodgrains brought into this country. Our total production is 54 million tons. It will only amount to 10 per cent. of it. If there is trouble in the future and famine occurs in any part of India you ought to have a sufficient reserve. It is not sufficient to say that we should only have as much as we have lost and only 50,000 more. We ought also to realise that the population is increasing and Government should make every effort to enlist the co-operation of the people. In spite of our differences in Bombay we, as early as in 1941, apprehended the danger and approached Government in the matter of high prices. The question was discussed and debated in the Corporation ; and if it is not presumptuous on my part, I may be permitted to say that I suggested to my friends that the real remedy lies in rationing. Without rationing control of prices does not work. The repersentatives of the Corporation then met the head of the Government, Sir Roger Lumley, who was a man endowed with understanding and who has left a good impression of his work in Bombay. We discussed this question with representatives. He did not commit himself but he appreciated the point of view placed before him and all the help that could be given by the Corporation was given in the matter of rationing. Rationing is essential. Rationing is essential and it should be adopted in as many urban areas as possible and in rural areas too, whenever possible.

[Mr. G. S. Motilal.]

Sir, another point which I wish to stress is this that you have a large area under jute crop in Bengal. Is it not possible for Government to reduce that area from jute crop and bring it under rice ? People would certainly now realise that rice is much more valuable than jute. I mean even if you have got to take some coercive measures they should be taken in the interest of the people.

Only day before yesterday I read a very gruesome account of the happenings in Bengal in the *Statesman*, the correspondent of the paper who went round to those places, says :—

" Medicines, clothes, blankets will be required in large quantities."

I should like to know from Government what steps they are taking to provide these, because the winter is coming over there and although it may not be so severe as in Delhi still it is cold weather and people will require some clothing. What are the steps that Government are taking ? Will they make some winter appeal and get every little bit that they can get from the people and then take some steps to provide clothing and medicine ?

Then, Sir, the *aman* crop is there and it is something which makes one very hopeful. They say it is a very fine crop but that correspondent says there will not be sufficient men to harvest that crop. What are the Bengal Government and the Government of India going to do in order to get it harvested. I am afraid, Sir, the Army is not suitable for harvesting a crop but a large Army of men like me and Mr. Hossain Imam and other Members of the House will probably be more useful for it, but the local people will be good enough. We should like to know from Government what steps they are taking about it.

There is one point more which still remains and which I should like to stress in conclusion. The Government of India shift their responsibility to the Bengal Government and the Bengal Government return that compliment to them. I think, Sir, both of them are to be blamed and both of them are responsible for this misery. Any person, any community who loves freedom and free institutions should not have the least scruple in turning down and denouncing those persons who are responsible for a calamity like this irrespective of party, irrespective of considerations of party, religion or community and certainly I do not say that they should be run down for nothing but if you are satisfied no such consideration should stand in the way and they must be told where their places are.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Mr. President, it pains me to find that on the occasion of this debate some Honourable Members of this House were so infected with the communal virus that they could not keep in check their animosity and threw their poisoned arrows against the League.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Including yourself. (*Applause.*)

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Sir, when attacks are made replies have to be given. Look whose hand it was that threw the first stone. Was it a Muslim who brought forward this question or was it a Hindu who brought it in ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS (Nominated Non-official) : Is hunger a Muhammadan or a Hindu ?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : If you indulge in this heat you will have very little time left for your speech.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : But I expect that you should do even justice to both sides.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I want to do justice.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (turning to Sir David Devadoss) : Do not insinuate and put into my mouth what has not come from it. This is a practice of the lawyers in which they usually indulge when they have a bad case.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Sir David Devadoss was a Judge.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : He was a lawyer before and he cannot forget his life-time's practice.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS : You have learnt a very good lesson.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Yes, from you !!

Mr. President, I was saying that the Assembly set a very good example of keeping away from communal wrangles and in this elder House people went into the communal quibbles into which always vanish hopes of the liberty of India. I have no intention, Sir, of wasting my time and the time of the House in communal wrangles if I am not re-provoked ; and I shall content myself with giving factual replies to the charges that have been made.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Don't take any notice of them if they provoke you.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Mr. President, a historical survey has already been given of the past inequities of the British Government by some of the Honourable Members. The Honourable Pandit Kunzru gave us a detailed description of the present condition of Bengal. So thus far my task has been lightened. I shall not try to make any political capital out of the calamity of the people as has been the case with some of my friends. I have no grouse to ventilate against any Party and we do not indulge in spiritualised politics. I have no intention of taking actions spectacular in themselves but ineffective and foolish, which characterise others and which evokes the applause of some of my friends who do not belong to that Party. I shall content myself with placing before the House a documented recital of the present day facts.

Sir, in dealing with the food situation one has to look at it from two angles of vision. Firstly is the short term policy and secondly a long term policy. The short term policy, Sir, deals with two aspects. Firstly, we should be warned by past mistakes and take suitable measures for avoiding them and secondly how to ease the situation. Unless you take into account your past mistakes and realise that they were mistakes you could never save the situation, for then you will go on committing the same mistake merely for the sake of precedent or prestige. I shall, therefore, in my survey confine myself to the handling of the situation by all who are concerned with it. Sir, when Mr. Sen gave his excellent speech on a bad cause I was not present all the time and I am greatly indebted to him for having made available to me a copy of his speech which has helped me immensely in coming to my conclusions. Mr. Sen started with a factual statement which was nothing but the truth but which might give a wrong impression. At the end of the first page of his speech he mentioned what was the real fact that a million tons of foodgrains were destroyed by calamities, floods, etc. But that does not give us a correct picture of the shortage of foodgrains in Bengal. The shortage of foodgrains in Bengal, according to our unreliable statistics, comes to 2 million tons. That is why I have referred to this subject only in passing.

Sir, I said that it is necessary that we should recapitulate and find out what were the mistakes, and whose were the mistakes. In the first place, all the material facts not being available to me, I cannot come to any judgment. But I can indicate the responsibilities in the order, not of the degree of crime, but in the degree of proximity to the crime First and foremost comes the Bengal Press, which tried to hide the situation in Bengal. I am making a sweeping charge, and I shall substantiate it. The newspapers,—because they had before them the bogy that if the Fazlul-Huq Ministry resigned the nightmare of the League would come into power,—thought that anything that would go to the discredit of the Fazlul Huq Ministry or of the then Government must be suppressed, and this was responsible for their keeping mum. The reason why I say is this. We had two debates, one on the 16th February, 1943, and the other on the 2nd March, 1943, and people who are conversant with world affairs, like Pandit Kunzru, people who keep a vigilant eye on the Indian situation, had not a word to say in those debates about the Bengal situation. *That shows that the conspiracy of silence was started, not by the Government of India, but by the Press right on the soil of Bengal.*

The second culprit in my list of proximity is the Bengal Government of Mr. Fazlul Huq, supported by the Shyama Prasad Mukerjee group, which had all the material before it, which knew that the prospect of the Bengal crop was less than 7 million tons against the average requirement of 9 million tons—a deficit of two million tons. If you look at the question in its proper perspective, a deficit of 22 per cent. is not a negligible deficit in the food situation that can be made up without

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a hue and cry. *And yet it kept silent—it had not a word to say about the food situation just to remain in power.* The third name in my list is the Governor of Bengal, who had access to all the papers—

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (Bihar : Non-Muhammadan) : Did Sir Nazimuddin issue a statement ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : He was not then Premier. And I will draw attention to what my two friends, one from Bengal and the other from Bombay, said when referring to the situation. In accusing the Bengal Government they forgot the dates—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : As an old member, you know that you have the discretion not to answer interruptions, in order to save time for your speech.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I am very grateful to you, Sir. I want to save time, and I have my notes ready at hand.

Sir, it was the duty of the Governor to send an S. O. S. At the Centre, the first to come in my list is the Food Department of the Government of India. And, mind you, the head of the Food Department was a Bengali gentleman against whom you cannot bring any charge—Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker, who resigned for the sake of others. He was in charge of the Food Department. You could not have had a more sympathetic member at the Centre. And yet, because of that conspiracy of silence of the Fazlul Huq-Shyama Prasad group, this question remained in obeyance. And, Sir, the new Food Member, whom we cannot name—the Food Member who remained in charge of the Food Department from 18th February to 2nd May—the unnamed person : what was his responsibility ? (*Interruption.*) *The men who regarded the entire Executive Council as unfit to hold charge of Food ! I really wonder if Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava took a Pelman course to qualify himself to take charge of the Food portfolio on the 11th of August, because on the 18th of February he was disqualified ;* he could not be placed even in temporary charge of the subject, and so the unnamed person took it over along with Commerce, Industries, Supply, Indians Overseas, and the rest of the paraphernalia. That man's conduct ought to be examined. He considered the entire personnel, especially the Indian personnel of the Executive Council, unfit to hold charge of any of the departments in this lot—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : You are paying a compliment to your own countrymen !

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I have not done it ; it was the head of the Government who declared, by his actions and not by his words, that they were incompetent and incapable of holding charge of these subjects. What prevented him from dividing these subjects among the remaining Indian Members—or even, for the matter of that, handing some of them over to my Honourable friend Sir Edward Benthall ? (*Laughter.*)

Sir, I now come to the Department of Sir Edward Benthall. This Department also remained sleeping ; it had no idea of the situation in Bengal. I am not speaking without my facts and figures. In reply to a question of mine, on page 162—I will not read from the Debates ; I will refer to my notes—I was told by the Secretary in the Department of War Transport that the number of wagons loaded from 1st January to 30th June, 1942—six months—was 334, 270. But in the year 1943, when there was a complete failure of crop in Bengal the number dropped by 5 per cent. to 320,720 ! This is the reply which I received from the Government itself, so you cannot question its correctness.

THE HONOURABLE SIR EDWARD BENTHALL (Member, War Transport and Railways) : May I ask the Honourable Member whether there was a shortage of foodgrains or a shortage of wagons ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Mr. President, that is why I want a Royal Commission—and immediately—so that my Honourable friend Sir Edward Benthall may be exonerated and the blame placed on shoulders that deserve it.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : But you yourself said that the Member in charge was sleeping !

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Yes, he was sleeping between 1st January and 30th June, but he is completely awake now and doing good work.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA : Is it all right now ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I hope it will be all right if he continues in this way. But I cannot place too much trust !

Sir, as I said, the number of wagons being loaded with foodgrains was less this year than it was last year. That tells its own story of the conspiracy of silence and of the ineffective methods adopted by the Government in power in those crucial days. All the blame that has been thrown on the Bengal Government ought to go back to the time of the Nalini Ranjan Sarker- Shyama Prasad-Fazlul Huq group.

Then, Sir, in my charge-sheet I find that the Government of India's other defect was that, if it could not have secured any ship from His Majesty's Government, it should at least not have given a step-motherly treatment to India in the matter of the ships which were on the Indian Register. There are 32 ships of the Indian Register placed at the disposal of His Majesty's Government——

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU (United Provinces Northern : Non-Muhammadan) : Would my Honourable friend answer a question ? He has criticized Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker, Mr. Fazlul Huq and Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. I am not concerned with the internal politics of Bengal—

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Excuse me ; I have not charged them : what I say is that the charges will fall back on them.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Very well. Whatever the language used by the Honourable Member may be——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : He has charged them with the conspiracy of silence.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : *At the crucial time. The time is the greatest factor. Relativity is the order of the day.*

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : I do not at all mind the language used by my Honourable friend. I am referring only to a question of fact. He referred to Messrs. Nalini Ranjan Sarker, Mr. Fazlul Huq and Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. He is entitled to express his own individual views and criticise these gentlemen. But it is rather surprising to me that he should have said nothing about the attitude of the present Ministry in denying that there was a serious shortage of food in Bengal from May practically till the end of July—(*An Honourable Member* : Especially the Food Minister.) The Honourable Mr. Sen said the other day that it became clear by the beginning of May that Bengal was faced with a disaster and yet the Ministers, not once but repeatedly denied this up to the end of July and prevented newspapers from publishing correct news about the famine in Bengal, and took other steps which prevented the public outside from knowing the facts.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I was referring to the proximity, as I said. From the date when this trouble started I am going forward date by date. I am talking still of those who committed mistakes before the 24th April, the date when I presume the present Ministry came into existence. I shall explain fully to your satisfaction, from the statements of Government and from other public sources.

I was referring to the fact that 32 ships on the Indian Register had been placed at the disposal of His Majesty's Government and yet this Government of India of ours, which is miscalled the Government of India but which as Government is not concerned with the people's conditions and their relief, could not ask His Majesty's Government to surrender even a part of this fleet. When I say this, I have my facts before me. 2 ships have been surrendered by H. M. G. to the Egyptian Government for conveying pilgrim traffic to Mecca and none of it was made available to the Government of India for use because that happened to be more profitable transaction for the Shipping Company concerned. This Government failed to take any ships from His Majesty's Government. Today ships in large numbers are passing by the shores of India conveying wheat from Australia to Persia and Russia and none can be diverted to our use except a small amount of 70,000 tons. I would remind the House of a reply which I received some time back that some wheat was exported from India in exchange for the wheat that has been imported from Australia. If we happen to import a little, it was sent back because it was a mistake to import any into India.

I then refer to what I have already called the responsibility of the junta of the disappointed politicians who woke up all of a sudden from a Rip Van Winkle sleep

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after 5 months on the day on which they found the Muslim League Ministry came in power, *i.e.*, the 24th April, and on the 3rd of May when Sir Azizul Huque assumed charge of the Food Ministry in the Government of India. That was the signal, from the 24th April onwards for a hue and cry, the like of which has never been seen, to be raised by the Bengal Press. They indulged in such propaganda that every effort made to balance the situation was disturbed. Even in this report of the Policy Committee a remark has been made that the press and the platform must co-operate in inducing the confidence of the people. Everything was being done in Bengal in those crucial days to bring about dissatisfaction and to encourage a split and avoid actions which would help to bring foodgrains into the market.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I do not understand you. Do you contend that the Bengal Press was conspiring with Government ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : No Sir. It was conspiring against the Government because a League Ministry was formed.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : At whose instance ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : At the instance of those who were turned out from the Ministry. It is a political game. Whether the facts are denied or not, I will just state them. There was no new fact which came into existence from the 24th April which had not existed in December, January, February or March. In a published statement, the Prime Minister of Bengal explained why he and his Food Ministers had made statement in May 1943. These are his words : " At a Conference held on 8th May Major General Wood laid down the following line of policy for adoption by the Government of Bengal. (1) The fact that there was a sufficiency of food for Bengal should be proved statistically and given the widest publicity by advertising and repeating *ad nausean.* (2) No price control in Bengal until Government acquires physical control of supplies of rice. " I ask you, was it befitting that a Government, working in the interests of the people, should stand out and refuse to co-operate with the Centre, in getting supplies to remove the huge deficiency of the province ? It was made clear that they would not get supplies unless they followed the mandate and dictates of the Food Department ? And here I should like to draw attention to the statement by the Honourable Mr. Sen this morning that there was uncalled for interference ; and an order has been passed under section 126A against the Sind Provincial Government preventing them from taking action as regards prices as they liked. I ask all Honourable Members to stand with me and fight for Provincial autonomy.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS : No, no.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR : We won't fight for provincial autonomy when people are dying in numbers.

(There were other interruptions).

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Order, rder.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS : We will never be able to finish in this way. Let us close this discussion.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : This action of the Government of India is an interference in the fixing of prices of a commodity when it was lower than that of any other province in India. The Sind wheat price is Rs. 7-8-0. The Sind Government wanted to raise this internal price and not the export price in the interest of the cultivators and the Government of India interfered and said that they shall not take action.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : Why did not the Sind Ministry resign if it was not satisfied with the Government of India ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Mr. President, the Congress resigned and I will ask you whether my Hindu brethren have improved their position by the resignation of the Congress. They have strengthened the Government of India. What have they got out of it except to humiliate themselves before Government. In the end they ask the Government of India for the release of the Congress leaders ? We do not indulge in blowing hot and cold in the same breath. We stick to our guns.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : You stick to your posts.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : We are taking lessons. We have a precedent for that too.

Sir, in order to understand the Bengal situation it is necessary that the Government of India should give a little more publicity to the problems of Bengal as they are because there exists a great deal of misunderstanding. People say that the Punjab is doing this and doing that, as if they are doing something wonderful (*Interruption*). Punjab has also a League Ministry. If I am provoked, I will not be responsible for. taking more time of the House. I will try to be as brief as possible.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Don't take any notice of interruptions.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Reference was made by my friend Kumar Nripendra Narayan Sinha to the fact that Bengal which was a granary of India is being reduced to this condition. Has it been realised what is the pressure in Bengal on land ? There are 779 persons to a square mile, less than an acre for each person. How can such a province with a huge population live on its own produce. And what is the condition of the Punjab ? There are 287 persons to a square mile. With an area about 25 per cent. larger than Bengal it supports a population which is less than half of Bengal. Things should be understood in their proper perspective. I do not wish to bring in any invidious distinctions.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH (Education, Health and Lands Member) : May I correct the Honourable Member's point about the Punjab ? He said there were only 287 persons to a square mile. That may be true of rainless areas. Population in places like Kangra, Hoshiarpur and Jullundur is 600 to 800 per square mile. In some places population is as heavy as in Bengal.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I am very glad that my Honourable friend who is a champion of the agriculturists has given this information. I will present to him certain statistics. The population of two districts of Bengal, Mymensingh and Dacca, equals the population of two Divisions, Ambala and Jullundur, with 8 or 9 districts. The area of these two Divisions is 33,742 square miles, where as the area of those two districts is 8,590 square miles. Land cannot go on producing when the pressure of population is so much. Government should not be condemned, because of the immensity of the population. I should have thought that this was the opportune time for all of us to unite and ask that relief to Bengal should be given in the shape of shifting its population to other parts where there is less population and virgin soil.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHOWDHURY (West Bengal : Non-Muhammadan) : Shift the Muhammadan population to the North-West Frontier Province.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : You mark Mr. President. I am speaking for the entire population of Bengal I do not make any distinction between Hindus and Muhammadans, but the Bengal Hindu cannot live without maligning the Mussalmans. It is this kind of mentality which makes it difficult to eradicate the calamity from which Bengal is suffering. I was referring to the fact that the ordinary course would have been to make united efforts to shift the immense population of Bengal to the parts which can accommodate them. I do not want that they should be a burden on anyone. The only longterm cure for Bengal's trouble is that it must have a colony.

I shall now come to the price question. That will be a criterion to judge whether the Bengal Government have mismanaged the situation. Prices rose up. My trouble is that I cannot make unsubstantiated statements with that liberty with which my friends can. I have to confine myself to statement of facts as they exist and as they can be corroborated by reliable statistics and statements. In reply to one of my questions during the last Session I was furnished a statement of prices prevailing in different centres of India and I am indebted to the Government for having placed it in my hands.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I would advise you to speak on more material points.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : In reply to my question No. 26 a statement was made by the Government giving prices at different towns of rice at

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different dates. The price of rice in Calcutta in December 1942 was Rs. 12-8-0 a maund and at the end of March it was Rs. 25—cent. per cent. increase during the regime of Fazlul Huq. Then the Nazimuddin Ministry came and the rise in the price of rice was from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 in mid-July 1943. There were cries of mismanagement and so on. But this was the rise only of 25 per cent.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHOWDHURY: On paper. We could not get rice.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I am not concerned with that. I am concerned with the information made available to me by the Government. I prefer to rely on the authoritative statement of the Government than on mere interjections by a biased mind. Take another province, the Central Provinces.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I admit everything, but how is all that going to help us? Why dont't you state some constructive proposals?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: You allow full latitude of one and a half hours to make their observations.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I am going to allow a reasonable time to you. I have already allowed you 40 minutes. But if you waste time with outside matters, it will be difficult. Yesterday I ruled that I will not give more than 15 minutes. I hope therefore that you will stick to the point and bring your remarks to a close as soon as possible. I am not going to adjourn till you have finished.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I would like to finish as soon as I can. In order to give a complete picture and to remove exaggerated and dramatized versions, I have to bring in facts. They had only sentiments and I have facts to place.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: But it does not help. There is no use crying over spilt milk. Come to something concrete.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I am coming to it. I am referring to the fact that rise in prices during the Nazimuddin Ministry was less than the rise in Fazlul Huq's Ministry and it was less than the rise in other parts of India. This is the point that I wish to establish. I was referring to the Central Provinces. The price was Rs. 8-4-0 in December, it went up by 25 per cent. to Rs. 10 in March and rose to Rs. 19-6-0 per maund in July. A 85 per cent. rise took place in Central Provinces prices. There was no change in the Government there. There was section 93 Government in December and again there was section 93 Government in mid-July and yet there was this rise in the province from which you, Mr. President, come. And what was the position right under the very nose of the Government of India in Delhi? Believe it or not. The price rose from Rs. 13 in March to Rs. 22 in mid-July, a rise of 70 per cent. in 3½ months. If right under the nose of the Government of India this can happen without any blame attaching to the heads of the Government of India, why blame the Government of Bengal, when the rise is only 25 per cent.

Well, Sir, I have it on the authority of the Policy Committee and other highly placed people *that the establishment of free trade in the Eastern Zone was the one thing which saved Calcutta from its death.* I, Sir, personally do not hold any brief for it. My political organisation, the Provincial Muslim League at my instance, passed a Resolution in which we did not express our approval of this free trade because free trade does bring in its train a great deal of trouble in the manner in which it was effected.

Well, Sir, you wanted some concrete suggestions and I am going now to present to you with concrete suggestions.

In fixing prices what should be the guiding principle? Is the Government of India to remain a free agent to do whatever its whims dictate or is it going to be subject to any desiderata? For practically all other things for which you have got prices fixed, you have a system. In the case of sugar, a system is adopted by means of which you find out the cost and then you add for profit and this and that and thereby you fix a price limit. It is done in a scientific manner. Look at the other things; a thing not of hundreds, thousands or lakhs, a thing worth Rs. 450 crores which you control. I refer, Sir, to the textiles. There you have got a Textile Panel

consisting entirely of the representatives of the Industry which fixes the price on certain defined bases. But for the fixation of the price of agricultural goods you will have neither any system, rational or irrational, scientific or unscientific nor even correlation. Even the authors of the Food Grain Committee Report throw no light on this subject. What should be the basis of the fixation of prices ? Even the speech of the Honourable the Food Member in the other House was silent on this aspect. If you will look at the report of the Food Committee—the Food Advisory Council of the Central Legislature which examined the recommendations of the Gregory Committee—you will find that there is no indication of the lines which will be adopted by the Government of India in fixing prices.

In my view, Sir, price is an important factor. We found in the case of wheat control last year, in 1942, that it completely broke down with the result that as soon as you lifted the price control immense quantities of wheat came to the market. Similarly, Sir, I find that this Government is heading towards a disastrous end in fixing arbitrarily the prices of foodgrains. I drew attention a few days ago in a supplementary question to the inequity of the U. P. Government which is levying a tax on the export of oil seeds and which denies having done anything or made any profits. There should be a concerted policy of the Government of India. If you are not prepared—and I think you should not be prepared—to fix an all-India price you must have a ceiling and floor just as we have done in the case of cotton, with which, Mr. President, you are so very well conversant. *We must have a ceiling and a floor for these foodgrain prices within which each Province will be at liberty to fix its limits, and that ceiling and floor, Sir, must be fixed in consultation with the representatives of agriculture nominated either on the advice of the Leaders of the Parties in the Central Legislature or on the advice of the Education, Health and Lands Departments of the Government of India.* Personally I would consider the Education, Health and Lands Department better than the Food Department where the interests of the agriculture are concerned. These are two methods open to Government to adopt if they wish that their food procurement may be successful ; for when all is said and done the food procurement policy will fail or succeed on the basis of the prices which you fix now. I was also surprised, Sir, that a Committee of such eminence as that of Sir Theodore Gregory's should not have laid down anything about the quantum of the procurement which they think sufficient to establish control. Are the Provinces to acquire only for their requirements of the urban areas and for export and therefore the deficit provinces will only provide for the urban areas and nothing for the rural areas ? Or are they to acquire even half or quarter of the supplies which they want for urban areas ? There is no indication anywhere, Sir, as far as my short survey has enabled me to see—I have not been able to go through all the papers completely as I received them on Saturday—about the quantum of procurement. The Government Members also, Sir, have kept silent on this point. I suggest, Sir, that the method which they can adopt for procurement without interfering with the discretion of the Provinces is, as I have stated, the fixation of a ceiling and a floor in consultation with us. If a Provincial Government non-cooperates or refuses to come forward and carry out your behest you can always enter the market. Just as we have Treasury Bills on tap, the Central Government can have a tap rate just above the floor but below the ceiling in the Province concerned and then anyone who wants to sell his foodgrains can sell them to the Government organisation. In this at least, Sir, I had the support of Pandit Kunzru, who speaking on Provincial Autonomy on the 16th February this year—I do not know whether he is wiser now or has given up his previous opinions—used the following words :—

> " The Provincial Government is a popular Government while the Central Government owes no responsibility either to the Legislature or to public opinion and the Ministers of the Punjab Government, who naturally desire that they should not lose their position with the electorate, hesitated to carry out the wishes of an irresponsible Central Government."

He was then a supporter of this idea ; I do not know whether later prejudices have affected his opinions or not.

Sir, I was referring to the necessity of having a measure of popular support in the formative stage;—not in the stage when you have finished,—by association with

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the representatives of the agriculture in the fixation of prices. I would also remind the House that all the requisites of the agriculturists are obtainable at very high prices. For instance, I referred, Sir, in the question time to the fact of oil being sold at Rs. 42 a maund in some provinces which is in parity with the price of rice at Rs. 25. Sir, that was the parity according to the former prices of these in 1942. Vegetable prices are not under control. *Ghee* prices are not controlled. Wood is not controlled. Charcoal is not controlled. Iron is not available unless you go to the black market and buy it at Re. 1 a seer. Yet this benign Government must fix the price of wheat and rice at a low level and thereby drive the entire produce from the hands of the agriculturists to be hoarded by the trade. This is the game and when it goes undergrounds in the hands of the trade nothing will bring it out except high prices.

Mr. President, I have a little more ground to traverse, and if you think this an appropriate time to adjourn for Lunch, that would be convenient. I will take about 15 minutes more. I have not yet dealt with the short-term and long-term suggestions that I have to make.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: There are several Government speakers and they should get enough time. I have given you 55 minutes.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I am very grateful to you, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I will give you five or ten minutes more; that is all.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Yes.

As regards the Ispahanis, I have no time, and therefore I shall lay on the table extracts* from the published pamphlet of the Bengal Government entitled "Bengal Government and the Ispahanis".

Sir, I was referring to the short-term policy, and I was referring to the fact that the Central Government must have a basis and state what their procurement plan is to be its proportion to consumption. I do not want actual figures to be worked out. I want to know what proportion it is to bear to the consumption—not to the produce, because I am not concerned whether the produce is more or less. I would have referred to the charge of hoarding against the agriculturist, but I have no time, and therefore I will simply state that those who are conversant with conditions in India know that nearly 85 per cent. of the agriculturists have no surplus to hoard; they are either deficit or just self-sufficient. It is only 15 per cent. of our people who have a marketable surplus. That is why, as referred to in the Committee's report, in cases of bad years we do not get anything to the urban areas, because there is nothing left. *I would invite the attention of the Government to the necessity of not eating up all the grains of this year. There must be a reserve left,* as our resources are not sufficient to feed the population of the country, nothing will be more disastrous than the exhaustion of stocks which these 15 per cent. have and the others have not.

I would just remind the Food Department that nearly 20 per cent. of the rice production consists of *aus* crop in Bengal which has come, and has gone without having much of an effect on the price structure. Be warned that this late winter crop does not disappear similarly without leaving any mark as it will if your policy of price dictation unconcerned with the reality of the situation, continues.

I was referring to the fact that in India we are not capitalists. We are socialistically inclined. A family does not consist of a man, his wife and his young children. It consists of dependents as well. We do not turn out our relations, as they do in other countries. And it is those who were really dependants on others, who are now dying in their hundreds and thousands. When I have nothing to feed myself with, I cannot carry the weight of the dependants, with the result that they suffer the most. I therefore ask the Central Government to come to the rescue of these people and make food available at cheap prices, as is done in every civilized country except this country—perhaps it is not a civilized Government.

Coming to the long-term policy, as I have very little time, I would place first in the order the reference which I had made to the removal of the population from

* Please see the Appendix at the end of these debates.

Bengal to other parts which are sparsely populated. And I specially include Burma. After Burma is reconquered, it should be made into a colony of India—at least a few parts of it.

The second suggestion which I have to make was taken up by my Honourable friend Mr. Motilal, that jute cultivation should be reduced.

My third suggestion will convince Honourable Members that we are not communalists. My third suggestion was that the irrigation facilities in West Bengal should be improved. West Bengal, as my Honourable friends know, is 80 or 90 per cent. Hindu. I feel for them as well. But my friends will never admit that. West Bengal had been a good area in the past, but on account of the drying up of the river system and other causes, it has become very deficient. Sometimes it is flooded, as was the case this year. There should be a systematization of irrigation. A good irrigation system should be followed, if you really wish to solve the problem on a long-term basis, and not just to patch it up. As my Honourable friend Mr. Sapru has remarked, the Englishman has lost all sense of proprietorship in India. They are having a short-term policy. In that case, I cannot ask them to adopt a long-term policy, because it means that they feel they have no interests which will continue for a long time, and the new Government of India which could give effect to it is not likely to be formed so we remain till Doomsday waiting for something to turn up.

I would also suggest a very minor thing, but which would be of some use, namely, that cultivable waste lands should not be allowed to remain fallow. It must be made a sort of offence for anybody to allow culturable waste lands to continue fallow for a number of years. Unless a condition of that sort is made, you will not be able to bring all the culturable waste land under the plough.

I had in mind also a constructive measure which would help not only Bengal but the rest of the permanently settled areas. I suggest that an irrigation cess should be imposed. This should be done by the provinces, of course, and not by the Centre. But the Centre can co-ordinate, and it can put the suggestion before the provinces, so that they may give facilities. It is well known to all agriculturists that land remains fallow only when there is no irrigation available. If irrigation is available, no one keeps his lands unnecessarily fallow. One has to leave one's lands fallow in a rotation system. But in the main the existence of fallow lands is due to lack of irrigation facilities. The Punjab has been able to yield bumper crops merely because of the irrigation facilities that have been placed in its hands. In that respect, the United Provinces have also done something through the electric grid system. The cess to be imposed on those who benefit from it.

As time is very short, I have to skip through all my arguments. I come to the amendment of the Honourable Mr. Parker. It is a whitewashing amendment. According to it, no one is to blame. It places a black mark on my fraternity—the fraternity of politicians. We are taboo. We are not to have entrance to this sacred temple. I think it is a slur on the entire Indian public to ask that a Commission should be appointed to consider a question relating to India without having on it any Indian politician. Could such a proposal be made in England with this rider ? You could not have cast a bigger slur on Indian politicians than this.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS : You are an example of it !

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : An ex-Judge remarks—inaudibly —that I am an example of it. I take pride in having this dictum from a judge outside the judicial bench ! That is my ambition, and it gives me great pleasure to have this dictum from such a judge !

Then I come to the amendment of my Honourable friend Mr. Sapru. I cannot understand, Sir—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I would advise you to refer to your own amendment and say something about it.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : I am opposing these amendments and I am giving you the reasons why I am opposing them. You may not allow me this privilege if I do not give the reasons now——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Don't you know that it is left to me which amendment I will put to the House first ? If one amendment is accepted by Government, the matter is finished.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: It is rather unjust on us—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I am not unjust. I am very fair. I am only pointing out to you the Standing Order.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: It will not give us an opportunity of recording our votes. That is why I am saying——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Alright, say what you like.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Sir, I was referring to the Honourable Mr. Sapru's amendment, in which he wants an impartial Commission. I have not heard of any Commission being appointed by the Governor General or by the Government of India. It is either a Royal Commission or a Committee of Enquiry. During recent years I have not known of a Commission without its being a Royal Commission. The Honourable Pandit Kunzru has still to speak and perhaps he will enlighten us as to what he means. He has a right, according to the President's ruling, to speak on the amendments afterwards, because he has not had a chance to speak on the amendments——

(*Honourable Members*: "No, no".).

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Do not mistake. There is no speaking, afterwards. Whatever you have to say, you must say it now.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Now I come to my own amendment We demand a Royal Commission now, not to make a post-mortem examination in 1951 as to the bungles of 1943. We want this to be done immediately so that we may learn lessons for the immediate future. The question of foodgrains and life is not such that it can wait. I have purposely omitted the word "immediately" from my amendment for this reason that I do wish that the Government should take the responsibility for the urgency of the situation. Secondly, Sir, when we ask for a Royal Commission, it is because we feel that it is the only competent body which can sit in judgment. The parties involved are so highly placed that a committee appointed by the Government of India will not be able to sit in judgment, will not be able to call for records, will have nothing of the requisites of a Royal enquiry. Here I should like to recount the genesis of this amendment which we have sponsored. It was not the demand of the Muslim League. It was a demand made in the province of Bengal by the disappointed politicians first and it was supported by the Muslim show boy of the Calcutta Corporation. We had nothing to do with it——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Do disappointed politicians come to an agreement?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Mr. President, that is the worst part of it; they can never come to an agreement unless you place them on the Treasury benches. The moment you place them on the Treasury benches, all differences disappear and as soon as they come out again, dissatisfaction comes. It is the only bond which can keep unity. Sir, we were not responsible for bringing forward this amendment. As has been stated publicly in the Press by Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan, the Secretary of the Muslim League Party of the other House, there was a meeting of Europeans, Nationalists and the Muslim League and in consultation this formula was evolved. Others backed out, we stuck to our words and that is all our fault. When some people heard whisperings from the highest quarters that Government cannot accept an amendment of this sort, they backed out. Others backed out because they thought that if a Royal Commission sat immediately, there will be a complete exposure of those who are now posing as the saviours of the people. The garb which has been taken by certain people—and it suits the Government of India that they should continue to do so—is that if a Royal Commission or enquiry committee were appointed now, it will disturn the work. But of what use it will be to have a finding after 5 years as to what was the cause of these happenings. I think even historians would be able to do this as well as research workers in the Universities. You could have it done by students who will study the subject in the calm atmosphere of a University and give a research report as to who was responsible, what was the degree of responsibility of each and so on. If you want to have it, have it now, so that the incompetence and ignorance of those who are responsible for this calamity may be shown to the world. If I had a skeleton in my cupboard I

would not have made a demand for a Royal Commission. The fact that I am making this demand shows how clean our record is, all those who resile from this Royal Commission have something to hide. They are afraid of exposing themselves to the public glare, whether it be the Government, the European Group or my friends here. Sir, I know that you have the right to put the amendments in any order you like but I should like to have the opportunity of recording my vote at least on one amendment. At least on one amendment I should like to record my opposition, and if I have to record it, I will record it against the Honourable Mr. Parker's amendment.

The Council then adjourned for Lunch till Three of the Clock in the afternoon.

The Council re-assembled after Lunch at Three of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I will follow your wishes and confine myself to a few remarks that I can offer. I judge people by their actions and the results that they achieve thereby and not by pure propaganda and talk. The Government of India, as far as I am aware, realising that there was to be a shortage of foodgrains owing to the influx of troops from abroad and other reasons, ordered 2½ lakh tons of foodgrains from England. The Right Honourable Mr. Amery and his colleagues were good enough to make shipping arrangement for the purpose and some ships—with about a lakh of tons of foodgrains arrived at Karachi. Later on when the Food Department was created, further shipments were stopped. I want to know from the Government Member in charge why further consignments were stopped and by whom. My information is that some responsible official of the Bengal Government—I need not disclose the name, as it is already known to all of us—said that there was plenty of foodgrains in Bengal and nothing further was needed. The spokesman of Government said, if I rightly quote the wording, that Bengal will be " flooded " with foodstuffs. As a consequence of such statements, perhaps the import of the rest of the foodgrains was stopped. The result was that the shipping that was arranged by the British Government was diverted to South Africa and foodstuffs were sent there. I should like to know who was responsible for that action ? Because in case the rest of the consignments had arrived in India the situation would not have worsened to such an extent. I wanted to go myself to Bengal and offer my personal services to my suffering countrymen, but the state of my health would not permit me to do so. However, the Sanatan Dharam Pratinidhi Sabha, of which I have the privilege to be the President, sent a relief party of over 150 persons and proposed to send 50 railway wagonloads of foodgrains. My information from our workers and other sources is that things were being so badly managed that people had lost confidence in the Government which resulted the present condition of misery and distress. My friend Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam said that owing to conduct of a certain Muslim Party against the other the present situation had arisen, and I say that the fight between two Muslim parties, whether that of Huq or Muslim League, resulted in the conditions so miserable.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Was Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee's party out of it, Sir ?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : Whether Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee's party was out of it or not, I am not going into such details.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Why only the Muslim parties ? Shyama Prasad and Fazlul Huq's parties were against the League Party. It was the result of a united fight between Hindu and Muslim parties. One party had the support of the Shyama Prasad Party. It was not a Muslim faction fighting against each other.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : I hold no brief for anyone. But I find that the mutual fight between these two parties did result in the exceleration of death rate and misery.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : No, Sir. I deny it.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Facts are facts and cannot be denied. Some friends have blamed the Britlsh Government for their want

[Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das.]

of sympathy. I must give credit to the British Government which actually came forward and arranged shipping for export of 2½ lakh tons of foodstuffs. Then some of my friends have blamed the Department of Food for their policy and so on. If the Food Department had not come forward to help Bengal, this regular flow of foodgrains from other provinces and their carriage would not have been made.

What happened in Bengal ? When in April-May 1942 there was fear of Japanese invasion thousands of boats were taken over by the Bengal Government. Many villages were got emptied and people deprived of their livelihood and habitations without finding for them suitable substitute. In England my information is that when any area is to be vacated, the civil authorities must house the people effected, and all facilities are given to them. What has been the fate of Bengal ? All the country boats were taken over by the provincial Government and the people engaged in plying these boats were deprived of their livelihood and the result was the present difficulty. In the other House an observation was made that some of these boats have been returned to the people. I do not know in what condition these boats have been returned, but I can say that the condition of these boats is so bad that they will not be workable. The fear of Japanese invasion began in April-May 1942 and certain areas were placed under military control and all those people who were made to vacate were not provided with any accommodation in other parts of Bengal. My friend from the Punjab said that Punjab rendered great service to Bengal and other famine stricken areas in India. I must say that Punjab not simply did service to this cause but also derived profit by raising the prices at which they offered to sell the grain. Why those prices soared up so high is a question which ought to be enquired into. My information is that the prices ran high because there was non-co-operation by the Punjab Ministry and between the Ministries of one Province and the other.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Why prices rose up in Delhi, Sir ?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : If they rose up in Delhi, the Delhi authorities are to blame.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : The Government of India.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : The Government of India cannot be blamed because the Government of India framed a policy, ordered foodgrains from foreign countries and it was somebody here—I do not want to mention the name—who was responsible for stopping that supply. In case all these supplies had arrived in India the position would not have worsened so much.

Then, Sir, some Honourable Members have raised the question of Grow More Food Campaign. This Grow More Food Campaign, is only a propaganda as far as I see. I should like to know what facilities have the various Provincial Governments offered to the people for Grow More Food policy. The Grow More Food policy is an automatic thing. In case anybody finds it a paying concern he will take to it himself but what has been the drawback which has discouraged this policy. It is the shortage of agricultural implements and agricultural cattle. Prices of such implements have run so high that people find it impossible in certain areas to grow more food. Growing more food, Sir, is an economic question. If I have more land, better implements and good seeds I will certainly cultivate more lands and get more profit. What I suggest to Government regarding this is that they must stop at least the indiscriminate slaughter of agricultural cattle.

Another point which I want to make is that Government should lend agricultural machinery to the various landholders for ploughing, thrashing, and for other purposes connected with agriculture. My friend Sir Jogendra Singh did mention the other day, that he did try some steam ploughs and machinery but it failed. I know, Sir, that it failed because the present holdings are so small that until Government finds requisite machinery for us and provides good manure we cannot successfully derive any benefit because the areas are too small to be dealt with by machinery. The Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam gave the impression that people in Bengal are starving and dying out of spite for the Muslim League Ministry. Well, this is a very surprising statement. No man will die for any such spite against the Muslim League Ministry. My information, from my

workers and my friends in Bengal is that the non-Muslims have completely lost the confidence in the Muslim League Government and wanted that the work of distribution of money and foodgrains should be entrusted to certain recognised institutions or reliable parties to be appointed for that purpose Sir, the President of the Muslim League set a very bad example in earmarking his charity for Muslims alone. Naturally the Muslim League Government have to follow the policy of its President. This policy is also responsible for depriving the non-Muslims of their legitimate share in the public charity. My information is, Sir, that the Chamber through which the Muslim League was working opened their free joint kitchens and those *lungars* both to Hindus and Muslims. In an orthodox Province like Bengal it was quite evident that no non-Muslim will take any food from such kitchens. So, the point that those *lungars* were meant for all communities is misleading.

My friend the Honourable Mr. Hossain held that there was a conspiracy of silence on behalf of the Press and the public. Sir, I cannot understand what he meant by this remark. When one has clean accounts, is never afraid of an audit. Why was the Press compelled not to publish the right news is a matter which shows a guilty conscience behind it. In reply to my friend Mr. Hossain Imam when he says that there was a conspiracy may I enquire why the " Star of India " was silent on the matter ? Why did not the " Dawn " throw some light and unearth this conspiracy. Why did not Sir Nazimuddin, who is Premier now, issue a statement ?

Sir, most of the points have been covered by the speech of my esteemed friends Pandit Kunzru, Sir Gopalaswami Ayyangar and others. I would frankly say, Sir, that what I heard from Sir Gopalaswami Ayyangar, who was himself a Famine Commissioner in Madras, even in bad famines deaths from starvation were unheard of astonished me. In Bengal, when there is no warfare going on if that is the condition of the people, what will be their fate if it becomes a centre of war. No Government can be proud of so many of its subjects dying of starvation.

Now, Sir, I wish to make a few suggestions. The first is that, in order to control or regulate prices of foodstuffs, Government should take revenue in cash and in kind, both, and the commodity that they take in kind ought to be kept as a reserve against the prices going up. They must throw this reserve into the market to bring down the prices if necessary.

The second suggestion that I wish to make is that they must get moral sanction from the leaders. Government Ordinances will not carry weight—they will be ineffective unless they are supported by the moral sanction of recognised Indian leaders. If Mahatma Gandhi, who has always declared himself to be in favour of finding food for the people, issues an instruction to all the prosperous families that they must feed one another famine-stricken family, a great deal of distress and misery must end I am glad to learn from the Honourable Maharaja of Darbhanga and other friends that all the big zamindars are feeding their ryots. Government could safely act the same way as well. That is a good sign. All the big zamindars in Bengal are devising methods to feed their ryots and save them from death. But, Sir, when the present buying capacity of the masses is daily decreasing, Government are also using their printing press for the issue of currency notes. Inflation has been carried to an extent unknown before. I consider that this inflation is also responsible for the rise in prices. My Honourable friend Chaudhri Ataullah Khan Tarar paid a tribute to the Punjab Government. I consider that the Punjab Ministry has been generally non-co-operating with the Government of India. It was one of the Ministers who went from village to village openly advising zamindars to keep back their foodstuffs, not to offer them for sale.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : When ?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : Last year.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : During the price control period ?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SRAN DAS : Yes, there was no real price control. So far as I know, control has been introduced in the Punjab only on cloth, and not on foodstuffs.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : But wheat prices were controlled for the whole of the year 1942.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Those prices were controlled only in name. It was the Government agent who went to the black market and paid a higher price. I can quote a number of instances to prove my statement that it was the Government agent who went to the black market and raised the prices of foodstuffs. In case my Honourable friend wants an example, I may say that in one of the big *mandi* of Abohar in the Punjab the Government agent went to the black market and raised the price by paying a higher price than the controlled price. I therefore maintain that it was the Punjab Government agencies which are to blame for raising the prices.

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY (East Bengal: Non-Muhammadan): Purchasers on behalf of the Government from contractors and sellers usually want half the profit as a bribe and thus prices are raised.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: My information is—and I stand open to correction—that Government appointed agents who were incompetent and who did not know the job entrusted to them. In the Punjab, unfortunately, everything was to be done by the so-called agricultural tribes, whether they were conversant with the matter or not. Whatever may happen, it had to be done by them. A bought from B, C bought from A, and so on, although they were all members of the same firm. The result was that prices rose, and the firm made out heavy profits. My information is—and I think I am right in stating that in one of the firms operating in the Punjab even a Member of the Executive Council of the Government of India is interested. I must say that such a combination creates a wrong inference, and the result is what I have described above. I know of a certain firm who entirely failed in meeting the demand of the Government because they knew nothing about how to buy or how to sell.

Sir, my Honourable friend Chaudhri Tarar paid a great tribute to the Muslim League Government. I have seen in the papers that young girls in great number are being enticed away, and have disappeared, children are being separated from their parents, and there is utter lack of medical aid during the above regime.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Since when?

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Since the inauguration of the Muslim League Government.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Order, order.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: I have stated a fact, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: That shows the mentality!

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHOWDHURY: Since the forcible repatriation of the destitutes!

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: That is the new Viceroy's scheme, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Sir, as regards the grow more food campaign, the right way to proceed with it is to find agricultural implement and manure, to manufacture ammonium sulphate in India and give it free to the zamindars for the first time so that they may know what advantages they get by its use.

I am for enforcing rationing of all necessities of life. Half-hearted measures will not do.

I am thankful to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief for coming to the rescue of the Bengal Government by giving them transport and other facilities. If this was not so I do not know what deplorable condition would have been in the villages of Bengal. Because when there is no food in the villages, the people resort to the cities, and spread infection. If suitable measures are taken for distribution of foodgrains in the rural areas, people will not be forced to come to towns like Calcutta.

Some arrangement should be made for the rehabilitation of the people who have been deprived of their land and are out of employment.

Sir, I do not want to detain the Council much longer. I would urge upon the Government to enforce ration measures on all necessities of life whether they are medicines or foodgrains, and provide agricultural implements and agricultural cattle to the cultivators for the campaign which they intend to start.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Sir, if I intervene in this debate at this late stage, it is not with a view to answer all the criticisms that have been made against the Government, nor indeed with a view to tell the House of all the details on which they want information. Sir, the question of food has been debated in this House and in the lower House for no less than 10 days now. The debate first started on the 12th of this month and today is the 23rd. Sir, no less than 52 speakers took part in the debate in the lower House and I think the number of those who have taken part in this House is also—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: 23.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: 28, according to my list. I am the 29th. I do not know. I may be wrong, but I have the names of all the speakers here.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Including the first occasion or since this motion was moved?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Since this motion. I congratulate both the Houses on the interest which they have shown in this important subject of food. It transcends every other subject with which the Government is concerned at the moment in its importance and its far reaching bearing on the general economy of the country. The subject of food, Sir, is no longer one for individual Provinces but a matter for India as a whole. In fact, its importance extends beyond the boundaries of India. And, Sir, whatever we do in regard to the solution of the food problem we must remember that we are on a world stage. All the nations of the world are watching us and for that reason, Sir, if for no other, I deprecate controversy and apportioning of blame at this stage. Sir, unfortunately, a little heat has been imported in the debate in this House which I much regret. This is not the time for politics, whether communal—

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: What heat is the Honourable Member referring to? He was never present during the discussion.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Sir, I am sure my Honourable friend knows what I am referring to. Sir, I would appeal to every one, whether a member of this House or not, to look at this problem of food without any pre-conceived ideas of politics. Sir, the voices of the starving millions in Bengal bid us to abandon all controversy. Unfortunately there has been a great deal of it in Bengal itself and I will not take on myself the task of arbitrating as to who is right and who is wrong. In fact, I would appeal to all that they should come together and give us a hand in this important work. Let us forget our differences and let us pull together to the common end.

Sir, I am glad that in this House and in the Lower House opinion has been more or less unanimous on this point that we should abandon controversy and politics. Mr. Jinnah, speaking in the other House, laid stress on this aspect of the matter and I am grateful to him for having given the lead which I hope will be followed by his supporters.

Sir, as I said a minute ago, food is no longer the concern of this province or that. We have deliberately embarked on an integrated food policy, an all-India policy, and as I have said in the Lower House and in the Food Conference, it is our intention to go ahead with this policy. We mean business and we shall implement it. We shall not be thwarted by the recalcitrancy of vested interests or of any one, no matter how powerful he may be. Sir, it is true that behind the food muddle there has been a great deal of controversy and I wish that this will now be a thing of the past.

Sir, the charge has been made against us that Government do not wish to take the public into their confidence, that Government do not want to associate the public in the work of food. I wish to deny this charge with all the emphasis at my command. So far as I am concerned, Sir, I am most anxious, most willing to have the co-operation and support of every one no matter what his race or his creed or his politics, and I look to the Members of this House to come and give us a hand. The task before us is a stupendous one and I want all the help and sympathy that I can get.

Sir, I am not going to talk of the past. We are still in the midst of the battle. After we have emerged victorious from it there will be time enough to talk of the past. For the present I wish to assure the House that the Government is leaving nothing

[Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava.]

undone which can be done to save the lives of the starving people and to have a well-thought-out long-term policy. I am gratified from the general trend of the speeches to know that this policy has the general support of the members of this House. As the Honourable Mr. Sen stated, the main plank of this policy is the adoption of an all-India programme. Sir, we do not wish to depart from it, although we know that there will be times when we shall be up against difficulties and against powerful interests.

A reference was made in this House to the direction which we were obliged to issue to the Sind Government only a few days ago. Sir, I had to do this in keeping with my policy, although as I need hardly assure the House I have no intention of riding rough-shod over the Ministries in the Provinces. The Sind Government who had controlled prices very well indeed during the last year and who strongly supported the statutory control of prices and rationing suddenly decided or were about to decide the abandonment of that policy. I had no choice left but to give them direction under section 126A that they shall not do that.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: What was the specific direction that the Honourable Member gave ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: That they shall not abandon the control price. I said to them—

"The Government of India are informed Sind Government have under consideration proposal to discontinue price control of foodgrains or alternatively to raise maximum prices for foodgrains fixed by the Sind Government under the Defence of India Rules. Having regard to the decision announced by the Government of India that statutory price control should be progressively instituted for all major foodgrains in all provinces and that no alteration in existing levels of control prices should be made without the approval of the Central Government and since the action contemplated by the Sind Government would seriously prejudice the steps which are being taken by the Central Government to implement their decision, the Government of India direct the Sind Government under section 126A of the Government of India Act that they shall not amend or cancel the orders of the Sind Government now in force fixing the maximum price of foodgrains in Sind without the previous approval of the Central Government."

That was the direction issued to the Sind Government by wire four days ago.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Was this done on rumours or on any specific information ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: We had definite information and I had the benefit of a talk with the Premier of Sind who happened to be here. Sir, that is only one instance. I know the Sind Government have resented this. But, Sir, we had no choice.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Has the Honourable Member done anything in any other Province of this nature ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: No other Province has threatened us in this way so far. But if any province behaves like that, the same will be done against that Province.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Every alteration in price will be done with your consent ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Yes, that is the order.

Now, Sir, a point was raised in the Assembly that although we had talked a lot about this all-India policy we shall not be able to implement it. I have quoted this instance to show that we mean business.

Sir, I said a minute ago that I am most anxious to have the association of the public with the work of the Food Department. I do not know whether my friends here have any doubts on the point. I have already given, I think, ample evidence of my desire to have the assistance of everybody in the very difficult work which I have undertaken——

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Including Mahatma Gandhi ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Yes, most welcome if he comes along, Sir.

With this object in view, Sir, I have already toured several parts of the country where I have made it my business to meet every section of the people. I departed from the established practice of meeting only the Government supporters; I met their opponents also in Calcutta. I met the Chambers of Commerce. I have met all those who are doing relief work and I wish to inform the House that within a very few days I am going again to Bengal, Orissa and then a little later probably to Madras, Travancore, Cochin and other parts where there is distress. Apart from my personal intercourse with these people, I have not lost time in setting up a Standing Committee of the Legislature, of both the Houses of the Legislature. I have agreed that there shall be 15 members on this Committee, 10 from the Lower House and 5 from this House, and I hope that those who have been elected to this Committee will soon find that the Committee is doing really useful work———

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: May I know at what interval this Committee is intended to meet?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: I cannot give an answer to that straightaway. I was going to say that the Committee will meet as often as it may be necessary.

Sir, besides this Standing Committee of the Legislature I propose setting up in a very short time—proposals are in fact under urgent examination—a larger Advisory Council to be associated with the work of my Department. On this Advisory Council I hope there will be representatives of all shades of public opinion who do not find a place in the Legislature and also expert members drawn from the producers, trade and other interests. Sir, I look to this Committee to give us much needed advice and guidance in our work.

Sir, I hope that my colleagues of this House will extend to me their fullest support. Mr. Sen, Sir, will deal with most of the points which have been raised in the course of the debate. I have discussed them with him and so he will be speaking with my authority. However, Sir, I wish to deal with two or three important points myself.

The first is the question of the procurement of the *aman* crop in Bengal. This is a very important matter and has been under discussion for some time. I was pressed in the Assembly to make an announcement about the decision of the Government on it but I could not do it because no decision had been reached up till then. I am now in a position to make a statement. We have been in the closest consultation with the Government of Bengal on their *Aman* Crop Procurement Scheme and as a result of the discussions which have taken place we have now decided as follows. Although there is a prospect of a very large crop it may be that the fear for the future will operate to influence cultivators to stick to their stocks and not to bring them freely to the market. We consider, Sir, therefore that one of our primary objects in dealing with this matter should be to re-establish confidence in the countryside and no undue demand is going to be made on the cultivators' own supplies. To this end, Sir, we propose to reduce to the minimum the amount which the Government Procurement Agency will be forced to procure in the early stages of the season at all events, and for that reason we propose to continue the importation of foodgrains in Bengal in quantities equivalent to the requirements of Calcutta. Supplies to the deficit districts will be met by linking these districts to specified surplus districts and licensing traders in the deficit districts for the purpose of procurement of specified quotas from the surplus districts. We shall use the agency of trade for procurement from a surplus district for the use of a deficit district which will be linked to the surplus district. It will, therefore, remain for the Government Procuring Agency to procure only the requirements of essential services outside Calcutta or in rationed areas outside Calcutta and a certain quantity for provincial reserves to meet emergent demands. The Government procurement organisation will in effect exert no pressure at all on the market. The main danger to the success of such a scheme is speculative buying. This is proposed to be controlled by a rigorous enforcement of the Foodgrains Control Order and the control of movement. The Government of Bengal intend to encourage the cultivator to bring his surplus to the market by propaganda, and every endeavour will also be made to make available in the rural areas a greater supply of consumer goods. Sir, in other words we

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are isolating Calcutta from the rest of Bengal and the Centre will try and feed Calcutta. That ought to be, Sir, to my way of thinking a great help and if our expectations materialise next year there should be no scarcity in the rural areas of Bengal and prices ought to come down appreciably. In fact, since rumours about this scheme have got about prices have already shown a decline and I am informed that rice is now available at a reasonable price, say, Rs. 16, and it is coming down every day. I earnestly hope, Sir, that the good sense and public spirit of the trade and of the people of Bengal will come to the aid of Government in ensuring the successful distribution of a bountiful crop and in assisting them to work this scheme successfully.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: What is the price which the Honourable Member has fixed for procurement of rice in Bengal?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Well, Sir, the Bengal Government have just now announced Rs. 15, but we have hopes of a lower price yet. We do not want to bring it down with a jump.

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: What about the industrial areas around Calcutta?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: They will be fed by us, by the Centre. Greater Calcutta will be fed by the Centre; that means 4 million of people.

I have got the prices which have been fixed for the different districts and if you want them I could show them to you afterwards.

Sir, this is a very important decision and I can only hope that we shall see it working successfully.

Sir, the Honourable Mr. Kunzru has referred to the state of affairs in Orissa and parts of Bengal. Mr. Sen will deal with this matter in detail but I wish to assure him that we are fully cognizant of the needs of Orissa. I have been in very close touch with Orissa and I am going there shortly myself.

Then, Sir, the Honourable Dr. Kunzru has referred to the need for some scheme for rehabilitation. I entirely agree with him. He has quite rightly drawn our attention to this problem and the necessity for Government to prepare their plans without delay. I am taking it up in consultation with the Provincial Governments concerned. In my view, the cardinal points may be summarised as follows. We must prepare to assist these people, in case of necessity, with loans or gratuitous help in securing cattle, utensils, clothing and the implements for their livelihood. It may also prove necessary to undertake legislation to secure the return to the original owners of lands sold during the period of distress. On payment of the price at which the lands had been sold.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Very good.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Am I to understand that the Government will advance loans to all the petty cultivators who have sold their land, in order to enable them to get it back?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: These are my ideas. I am working on these lines, and I cannot commit Government to anything at this stage.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR (Central Provinces: General): That means, these are the Honourable Member's personal ideas, and not the ideas of the Government?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: I started by saying that "in my view the cardinal points may be summarised as follows:"

As I said, it may be desirable to undertake legislation to secure the return to the original owners of lands sold during the period of distress on payment of the price at which the land had been sold, the price being distributed over a number of years to suit the paying capacity of the individual concerned. These are matters in which the provinces may be expected to take the initiative. But I shall not fail either to stimulate or to support them in their endeavours by every means in my power.

The question of medical aid and the remedying of malnutrition are already the active concern of my Honourable colleague sitting on my right, the Member for Education, Health and Lands, and I know that he is doing his best in the matter. He

deputed the Director-General, Indian Medical Service, to Bengal, and the report made by this officer is under his urgent consideration.

Sir, a point was made by the Honourable Mr. Parker regarding the introduction of rationing in Delhi. I entirely agree with him, and that suggestion is in keeping with my policy of introducing urban rationing in all the cities of the country. It is essential, in my view, that an example should be set by Delhi as the capital of India—

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: And Ajmer.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: We have already taken up the question of rationing Delhi, and our Rationing Adviser has been in consultation with the Delhi Administration. It is our intention to introduce rationing on a full scale in this city from the Viceroy downwards just as soon as the scheme can be prepared and put into execution.

Sir, there is another matter on which I might say just a word or two, and that is on the question of supply of copies of the report of the Gregory Committee to Honourable Members. I admit that there was some delay, but this was due to the fact that in these days of scarcity of paper and printing delays the report could not be laid earlier. We have lost no time in getting on with the recommendations of the Gregory Committee, and as soon as ever we could we had the report printed, and what I decided about it was that any Honourable Member who may be interested in the report should be supplied with a copy. We had only a limited number of copies printed on account of paper economy. That is the reason why one or two Members of this House had reason to complain against not having secured the report.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Did any shipments of paper arrive during the last two weeks?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: I said, economy of paper. On account of economy of paper, we have very strict orders about the printing of copies. As the Honourable Member will see, we are using chits here. This has never been done before.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: But the Assembly is not having economy.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Sir, another matter about which I would like to say a word is the purchases for the Defence services. I am sorry that a number of exaggerated statements are still being made in regard to this. As I have stated more than once, the requirement of foodgrains for all the Defence services amounts to not more than 700,000 tons. This quantity is a mere fleabite when we consider the normal production of foodgrains in the country, which is 52 million tons. I do not think that the present scarcity can really be due to these purchases for the Defence services. It is true that it is a contributory cause, but to say that the entire trouble is due to the purchases made by the Government for the Army is, to say the least, an exaggeration.

Sir, so far as the situation in Bengal is concerned, I know that it is still bad. I do not wish to offer any explanations on behalf of this Government or of the Bengal Government. Mistakes may have been made in the past; probably they have been made. But, Sir, all that I wish to say now is that we seem to be on the right keel now. Since July last we have pumped into Bengal no less than 300,000 tons of foodgrains, and we hope to send another 120,000 or 150,000 tons before the year is out. On top of it we are expecting substantial imports. So that, so far as supply of foodgrains goes, I think Bengal is now very nearly out of the woods.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: May I interrupt the Honourable Member? You have sent foodgrains to Bengal. Have you ensured that those foodgrains have been equitably distributed?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: That is a very difficult question for me to answer. As my Honourable friend knows, that is the business of the Provincial Government. I could not undertake the distribution from the Centre. But I am very glad to be able to inform the House that the assistance which we have received from the military has greatly improved the distribution arrangements and things now are definitely looking up. I think food is reaching now every nook and corner of the Province. Sir, the House will thus see that what we have been able to do during the last 3 or 4 months has

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not been, as has been described by some people, nothing. Just imagine what would have been the position of Bengal if all these supplies of grain had not reached Bengal, because, in August Calcutta was reported to have not more than a few days' supply.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: How much is being moved out of Calcutta daily?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: 3,000 tons a day now. The despatch arrangements have been much improved and we are now moving out quite substantial quantities both by rail and by river and by military lorries.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: I hope that the Government realise that a much larger quantity must be despatched to the districts before the position there can improve appreciably.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Yes, Sir, I have realised that, and I have been clamouring for it and to see that the distribution arrangements are all right, that everything is proceeding on the right lines, personally I am going to Bengal in a few days.

Sir, as I have said in the other House, we have given every kind of assistance to the Bengal Government. We have not denied them any assistance. But the salvation of Bengal lies in that Government putting its own house in order, its own purchase arrangements and distribution arrangements, and in its efforts in this direction the Bengal Government will receive every possible assistance from the Centre.

Sir, I have only now to say one word about the amendments which have been moved to Mr. Sen's motion; these relate to the question of the demand for an inquiry. I would like, Sir, to make my position once more perfectly clear. I fully recognise the depth and sincerity of the feelings which have given rise to this demand. I am prepared to accept, Sir, that an inquiry, and an inquiry of a full and authoritative character, may be desirable. But I must make it perfectly clear that I am opposed, irrevocably opposed, if you like, Sir,—to any inquiry at the present time or in the immediate future for several reasons. I doubt indeed whether it would be practicable to constitute at the present time a Committee or Commission of Enquiry of adequate weight and status to deal with a question of this importance without calling away from urgent duties men who can ill be spared. Even if that consideration be not correct, the mere statement that an inquiry is about to be held and, even more so, the holding of that inquiry cannot fail to distract the Ministers and other officers from their present duties and engage time and energies which ought to be, and must be, for some time to come, directed solely towards the relief of famine conditions, the rehabilitation of the people and the effective administration of food control. I fear also, Sir, that the present time would increase bitterness of feeling. We have had exhibitions of it in this House. I do not know whether an inquiry like this would really result in anything useful if we are to talk, as we did, in regard to the sins of commission and omission of the two Ministries which have functioned in Bengal during this year.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: In other words, you do not want to divert the attention of these men who are doing useful work in the districts.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: I feel also, Sir that an inquiry would militate against that concentration in common effort which is so essential to the solution of the food problem. We are, Sir, still in the middle of the battle and we cannot tell what its outcome will be. Our position is not that there cannot and must not be an inquiry. Far from it, Sir. But while we are still in the midst of the emergency and the crisis is upon us and is still continuing, it is clearly not possible to determine when is the most appropriate or the earliest practicable time for an inquiry to begin. We cannot decide to what exact points that inquiry must be directed, nor in consequence can it be said what form the inquiry should take or who should conduct it. These points cannot be decided now. We do not know when the most critical stage of our struggle will end, nor what will be the result. The amendments before the House, Sir, indicate indeed that there exists considerable difference of opinion as to the form and nature of the inquiry which is desired. They have advocated more than one type of inquiry including that of a Royal Commission.

As to the proposals for a Royal Commission, I cannot say what will be the views of His Majesty's Government on that recommendation. So far as the Government of India are concerned, we are convinced that no form of inquiry would be appropriate to the end in view unless it were so constituted and conducted as to be above and outside politics, constructive in its approach to the problem and directed to securing administrative improvements and practical measures to prevent a recurrence of famine and to minimise its effects. I regret therefore that I cannot accept any proposal which demands that an enquiry be held now.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Could you not come to an agreed resolution on the subject?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: I regret that I cannot accept any proposal which demands that an enquiry be held now and Government will therefore vote against the amendments which would have that effect. I am however, prepared to accept the amendment which stands in the names of the Honourable Mr. Parker and the Honourable Mr. Burder. I hope, Sir, that I have made my position clear. The time has not come when it is in the larger interests of the country to commence an enquiry. The time has not come when either its constitution or its terms of reference can properly be determined. I trust, Sir, that on this assurance of mine the House will see fit to withdraw the other two amendments. Sir, I have nothing more to say.

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMARSANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY: I want to know whether the Government is formally declaring famine in the affected areas and applying the Famine Code in those areas.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: That point will be answered by Mr. Sen when he is speaking.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Will it not be a matter for the Provincial Government?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Mr. Sen will deal with this point. He has been Revenue Secretary there.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT (to the Honourable Mr. B. R. Sen): You will please confine yourself to other points, because almost all important points which have been raised in the debate during the last three days have been disposed of by the Honourable the Food Member.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN (Nominated Official): Sir, We have now had nearly 3 days' debate on my motion on the Food situation and thanks to your intervention every side of the House has had the fullest opportunity to express its views. In the course of the debate many controversial issues have been raised. Sir, I do not wish to take up any of these controversial points. For, I do not think that any reply that I can give will end those controversies nor that these controversies are of any practical use in the solution of the present food problem in the country. I propose, first of all, to deal with some of the points raised by the Honourable Mr. Kunzru in a speech which in dignity of language and sobriety of treatment may well serve as a model to many of us, particularly to some Honourable Members sitting behind him.

The Honourable Mr. Kunzru has alleged that the Government of India have not shown sufficient sympathy to Travancore/Cochin. I shall deal with this point first.

The deficit declared by Travancore/Cochin was 517,000 tons of foodgrains for the whole year. Under the Original Basic Plan the quota we allotted to Travancore/Cochin amounted to 473,000 tons. Only 143,000 tons were received by Travancore/Cochin up to 15th July. Under the Revised Basic Plan which was based on surplus voluntarily declared by the surplus provinces, we could allot a quota of only 79,000 tons, subsequently raised to 116,000 tons. Despatches upto the end of October under the Plan amounted to 46,000 tons. This means that from the end of December till the end of October, Travancore/Cochin received in all 190,000 tons. This was of course far short of their requirements.

Under the preliminary *Kharif* Plan for 1943-44, Travancore/Cochin have been allotted a quota of 133,000 tons against 120,000 to Bombay and 137,000 to Bengal. It has already been possible to step up this quota to 166,000 tons. In addition to

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the above allotments, there will also be the next *rabi* allotment of wheat to Travancore/Cochin and almost certainly some further allotment of wheat from imports expected next year. It is not possible to give a definite indication of quantities at present but 50,000 tons of wheat for the next year would not be an over-estimate. To all these amounts must be added a part of the difference between the revised Basic Plan figures and the actual despatches upto the end of October. A total quantity of 25,000 to 30,000 tons of foodgrains on this account should move by the end of March next. Thus there is every prospect of Travancore/Cochin getting 246,000 tons of foodgrains in the next crop season not taking into account any improvements on the *Kharif* quotas that may take place.

From what I have said it will, I hope, be clear that while our supplies to Travancore/Cochin this year did fall far short of their requirements, the failure was not due to any lack of sympathy or effort on our part. I have already explained in my opening remarks how the Original Basic Plan based on the principle that the annual requirements of each foodgrain of a Province should not exceed the lowest figure during the three years immediately preceding the War failed on the opposition of the surplus provinces. Government have now accepted the formula of the Gregory Committee which is that the normal consumption requirements of a Province should be taken as the average of the estimated harvests of all the foodgrains over a five-year period ending 31st March, 1942 *plus/minus* the average imports/exports of the same period. We propose to proceed in two stages : First to devise a plan of distribution as between the different deficit areas, in the light of the declared surpluses of provinces and States for immediate operation from the beginning of the relevant crop year. This preliminary plan would be circulated to the provinces, and movements could begin in accordance with the allocations. We will then pass to the second stage using the formula proposed by the Committee for calculating the target deficits and surpluses of the provinces and States to serve as the basis of discussions between the Centre and provinces or States concerned. In applying the formula regard will be had to all the relevant facts such as actual crop conditions, harvesting periods, abnormal increases in population, and statistics of past imports and exports. The first edition of the plan has been given effect to from the 1st November. The information on which to check the first stage in the light of the formula and other relevant factors will begin to be available in January. The revised or final edition of the plan would be issued in April and begin to be operative from the beginning of May. It is hoped that this procedure will help to place planned supplies from surplus to deficit areas like Travancore/Cochin on a much less uncertain and precarious basis than in the past.

The next point to which the Honourable Pandit Kunzru referred was the case of Orissa.

The allegation has been made that to meet the needs of Bengal, the interests of the people of certain districts of Orissa affected by cyclone flood have been sacrificed. Three districts are mainly concerned, Balasore, Ganjam and Puri. I shall give the present position with regard to these districts as far as known to us.

In Balasore district the preponderating element among those attending the Free Kitchens has been refugees from the Midnapore district and Santhals from Mayurbhanj and other border States. The proportion of the local people has been comparatively small. Mortality has been high particularly among the Midnapore refugees. Steps have lately been taken to improve medical attention and sanitary and public health arrangements at these kitchens, and also for providing where possible shelter and clothing for those destitutes who have left their homes. With the opening of new Relief Kitchens in the Contai Sub-division across the Balasore border, the number of Midnapore refugees has shown an appreciable decline. It is hoped that Relief Kitchens will not be necessary after the middle of December. The most hopeful aspect of the local situation is the bumper *aman* crop, the harvesting of which has already commenced. In the flood and cyclone affected area of the district, Government are still feeding about 40,000 people.

The area is now drying up and those who are not employed in the harvesting operations will be employed on relief work. The fact that there has been no migration of the rural population out of these areas supports the claim made by the Orissa

Government that in terms of the distinct situation they have kept the situation well under control.

The causes of distress in the Ganjam district are much wider than the damage caused by last year's cyclone. This is a district from which normally there used to be a large exodus of seasonal labour to Burma. Apart from the employment thus available, remittances from Burma were estimated to bring into Ganjam between Rs. 20 and Rs. 25 lakhs a year. All this has been lost. On the other hand about 40,000 Burma evacuees have returned to the villages. The small port of Gopalpur more or less subsisted on the weekly Burma shipping service. Its absence has thrown many out of employment. Neighbouring villages lived on the carting traffic for the Port which again has gone. The fishing villages bordering on the Chilka Lake are in a bad state as they are unable to get a price for their fish proportionate to the high price of rice. Good work is being done by officials and non-officials alike and no one throughout the area who needs a meal need go without it.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Has the Honourable Member himself seen a single free kitchen in Ganjam that he is making this statement ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: We have a certificate from no less a person than the Honourable Pandit Kunzru that the Government kitchen at Chhatrapur is the best he had seen anywhere.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: The Honourable Member has omitted to refer to any of the other free kitchens which I saw.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: In any case, we have got a certificate from him about one of the kitchens that we have in that district.

Here again, as in Balasore, stocks have been maintained by bringing in supplies from Koraput and Sambalpur districts. The crop in Ganjam is at least a month later than in Balasore. It is not anticipated that the kitchens will be needed after the end of December.

In Puri there have been a few deaths attributed to starvation but the district position is well secure.

Sir, the help that Orissa has rendered to Bengal in her distress has been made the subject of controversy both in Orissa and outside. May I remind the House that when Free Trade was introduced in the north eastern zone, the province which resisted it most was Orissa ? The Orissa Government requisitioned all stocks purchased by Bengal traders and froze all stocks which were readily available in the market.

Sir, it is the same Administration that has now agreed to release all the frozen or requisitioned stocks or to supply an equivalent quantity to meet the acute distress in Bengal. When we are trying to persuade the Provinces to impose on themselves an equality of sacrifice on an all India basis and to part with what each can spare in the best interests of the country as a whole, is this action of the Orissa Government instead of being held up as an example for all India to follow to be made the subject matter of political controversy ?

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: May I clear up a point as the matter is otherwise likely to create a serious misunderstanding ? I did not object to any help being given to Bengal. Indeed, I myself have asked the Government as insistently as I could to give Bengal the utmost help it could. Our complaint against Orissa, therefore, is not that it helped Bengal but that the needs of its own people were not properly looked after.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Sir, what I have just stated is in contradiction to what my Honourable friend, Pandit Kunzru, alleges. We think that the Orissa Government made sure of their stock position before they exported rice to Bengal.

The Honourable Pandit Kunzru also referred to the question of rehabilitation, which has been dealt with by the Honourable the Food Member and I shall not refer to it except that I found this morning the Honourable Mr. Motilal stating that the Government of Bengal did not know where these destitutes in Calcutta came from.

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Of course, the Government of Bengal know that these destitutes came from the surrounding districts.

One of the points on which there appeared to be the greatest misconception among the Honourable Members of the House—and for that matter outside—is the extent of purchases of foodstuffs for the Defence Services in India and its effect on the food situation of the country. More than one speaker committed themselves to the statement that the present shortage of essential foodstuffs in Bengal was due to the purchases made for the Defence Services, that purchases for the Army are made at recklessly high prices and that the Reserves of the Defence Services are considerable I should like to state the facts.

The requirements of the Defence Services fall broadly into three parts : (*i*) Foodgrains, (*ii*) perishable articles, like vegetables, eggs, fish, poultry, etc. (*iii*) processed and tinned foodstuffs like dehydrated meat and vegetables, canned fruits, etc.

So far as foodgrains are concerned, the total requirements of the Defence Services now amount to 650,000 tons a year, of which wheat constitutes 500,000 tons and rice 150,000 tons. In other words the requirements of the Defence Services amount to only 1·2 per cent. of the total production of foodgrains in India. It is, however, to be noticed that this 1·2 per cent. does not represent a net addition to the demand on Indian resources. The Indian soldier would eat even if he remained in the village though as a soldier he may eat a little more. Again it will be seen that the demand of the Defence Services falls primarily on the surplus wheat producing areas and not upon rice producing areas. All purchases of foodgrains except those which have to be made under circumstances so pressing as not to permit of indents—the quantities so purchased are extremely small—are made by the Food Department of the Government of India. The purchases are made by the Provincial Government Procurement agencies as in the case of purchases for civil requirements. In the matter of prices no distinction is made between civil and military requirements, *i.e.* the same ceiling prices apply to both. As in the case of purchases for deficit areas, purchases for the Defence Services are made in surplus areas only.

On the allegation of maintenance of huge reserves for the Defence Services, I can do no better than quote the observations of the Gregory Committee :

> "We are not prepared, for security reasons, to state what are the present day, the authorised reserve is, but we are satisfied of two things (*i*) the authorised number of days reserve is below the figure of six months and therefore, still more below the figure of nine months which have been mooted in public discussions, and (*ii*) the actual reserves have for some time been below the authorised reserves."

The allegation that large scale purchases of rice has been made in Bengal for the Defence Services had been categorically denied by us. In fact no rice has been purchased for the Defence Services in Bengal this year.

As regards perishable articles, it is true that local purchases for the Defence Services have had the effect of considerably reducing the supplies available for the civilian population. To meet this problem a scheme has been launched on a considerable scale to set up dehydrating factories in suitable areas and to take up cultivation of vegetables to meet the capacity of these factories. The major part of the dried vegetables will be produced in the U. P. in two Government dehydrating factories and several private contractors' factories. Arrangements were made earlier this year under which the U. P. Government are growing 17,587 tons of fresh vegetables for supply to these factories. Under this scheme the growers in the U. P. are assured of a fixed price and will also receive bonuses if the market price greatly exceeds the fixed price. The Food Department have also agreed to bear 50 per cent. of actual expenditure which is estimated to be Rs. 2·75 lakhs, involved on staff and organization required for the scheme. It is obvious that to the extent dehydrated vegetables replace fresh vegetables, the pressure on civilian requirements will be reduced.

As to processed foodstuffs, the policy of the Food Department is to import as much of the Defence Services' demands for processed foodstuffs as can be obtained from overseas. This applies to all tinned and bottled provisions. Only those items peculiar to India, and which cannot be better supplied from overseas, will be

supplied from indigenous sources. In the case of eggs, Food Department have made enquiries from Secretary of State as to the availability of egg powder from overseas. Arrangements are also being made to increase imports of dehydrated meat for the British troops so as to relieve pressure on the local supplies. Sir, in the course of debate severe criticisms have been made about the lack of proper statistics. It must be admitted, Sir, that the present position regarding agricultural statistics in India is most unsatisfactory particularly in the permanently settled areas like Bengal, where Government do not maintain any revenue staff of their own. As the Gregory Committee have stated, an improvement in the preparation of agricultural statistics is not only desirable but essential for the formulation of a successful food policy in India. This is a matter which is now under the active consideration of the Education, Health and Lands Department.

As to vital statistics, the figure of deaths from starvation or disease combined with starvation given by the Honourable the Food Member at 58,000 in the Lower House has been severely commented upon by several speakers. May I say, Sir, that the Honourable the Food Member in giving this figure clearly stated that the figure had been supplied by the Government of Bengal from the very rough estimates of District Officers and the Honourable Member held no brief for the accuracy of these figures ? The Government of India are entirely in agreement with the Honourable Members that the position is most unsatisfactory and an improvement in the matter should be attempted by the Local Government.

In this connection I would like to refer to the remarks made by the Honourable Sir Gopalaswami Ayyangar. He said that the technique for dealing with famine in India had been so perfected by successive Famine Commissions that if the regulations embodied in the Famine Code had been energetically applied, the famine in Bengal could have been kept under control. He referred to his own experience as a Famine Commissioner in Madras when throughout the operations not a single life was lost. May I, Sir, on my experience as a Famine Commissioner who had to take charge of operations to meet the first shock of famine in Bengal after the devastating cyclone towards the end of last year, say that the famine in Bengal this year is so fundamentally different in character from any famine anywhere any time in British history in the past that the regulations in the Famine Code in essential respects bear no application ?

Sir, as I explained in my opening remarks the general panic and feeling of insecurity arising from causes connected with the War formed the basis of the present famine in Bengal. The crop in 1941 was a bumper one. The crop in 1942 promised to be average but within a few weeks of the harvest over a million tons of standing crops and quite a considerable quantity of the carry over from the previous year were destroyed by the cyclone and the fungus pest. This completely upset the economic equilibrium of province. Frantic purchase led to diminution of the marketable surplus, and the feeling that no supply was to come from Burma added to the panic. Within two months of the harvest which had yielded enough to support the whole population of Bengal *at least* for ten months, rice disappeared from markets in many areas. At the same time, the Provinces which normally fed definite areas in Bengal had put up barriers and very little of the surplus expected from these areas were actually allowed to come into Bengal. Added to these, the Railway and River transport normally available to deal with a famine in Bengal were largely engaged in other urgent and important work. In the coastal districts, the internal transport, *i.e.* boats, motor vehicles, cycles etc. had largely disappeared in the areas devastated by the cyclone even bullock carts were not available as most of the cattle had been killed by the cyclone. How would my friend Sir Gopalaswami Ayyangar have run operations under the Famine Code over this vast area without supplies, without transport, with people in the grip of an unprecedented panic ? Sir, I make these remarks just to show how wide of the mark one can be in judging the recent happenings in Bengal by the normal standards of life and conduct and the normal rules of administration.

Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. Burder in the course of his speech expressed a desire that the House should be supplied with a progress report of the work done by

[Mr. B. R. Sen.]

the Department in implementation of the Food Policy Committee's recommendations. I am in a position to give him some information on the progress that we have made.

I have already placed before the House the decision of Government on the four main recommendations of the Foodgrains Policy Committee, *viz.* :—

(*a*) The Basic Plan,
(*b*) Procurement,
(*c*) Statutory Price Control, and
(*d*) Rationing.

I shall now relate here the progress made in the implementation of these decisions and the other recommendations of the Committee which have been accepted by Government.

Basic Plan.—As I have stated in connection with supplies to Travancore/Cochin, we have already circulated the provisional 'Budget Estimate' Plan. This is composed of the *rabi* part of the revised basic plan, effective upto the end of March, and the new *kharif* plan which was circulated to representatives at the last Food Conference, and to which they are already working. In a few days we shall be sending out a more firm statement of the provisional *kharif* plan, which is only waiting for a final decision on the amounts which are to be sent as a special supply to Bengal.

Procurement.—We have been receiving and scrutinising procurement schemes prepared by various local governments. The most important procurement scheme which we have been considering during the past few weeks, and for which we sent one of our senior officers down to Calcutta, in order that we should be closely associated with the discussions, is the Bengal Procurement Scheme to which the Honourable the Food Member has just referred.

Statutory Price Control.—On the 5th October, we had already addressed provincial governments with reference to the recommendation of the Committee, that, pending enforcement of statutory control of prices throughout India, provinces desiring enforcement of such control or ceiling prices may proceed, subject to approval of Central Government. Pending formulation of price policy by Central Government, and until further orders, Regional Food Commissioners would fulfil the functions of the Central Government and all price control proposals should be examined or discussed on a regional basis in close consultation with Regional Food Commissioners. After such consultation and before subsequent action, proposals should be telegraphed to us for our views.

We followed this up with a letter to governments in Eastern Region, stating that we considered it highly desirable that they should, in consultation with each other, arrange that the statutory maximum prices fixed for rice and paddy in their areas, should be in parity with each other by the middle of January, 1944, and we asked them to initiate discussions with each other and with the Regional Food Commissioner to that end. We have received certain proposals from the Regional Food Commissioner in this matter.

Certain provincial governments had not observed our instruction to refrain from price control measures which have not had our approval, and the issue of a formal direction on this subject is under consideration. A direction has already been issued to the Sind Government that they shall not alter in any way the existing price control orders in force in that province. The question of price control in the Punjab has been engaging our close attention for some weeks past. The constitution of a Price Advisory Panel is under consideration.

Rationing.—I shall explain the progress in rationing a little later.

In addition to the above, there are some 80 other recommendations of the Policy Committee, each one of which is under examination. Several of them concern other Departments and are being discussed with them.

Among the recommendations of primary importance other than those referred to above, action, either complete or preliminary, in accordance with the Committee's recommendations, has already been taken, in respect of the following :—

(1) Prohibition of exports, subject to certain very minor exceptions.
(2) Arrangement with H. M. G. for imports.

(3) Central Foodgrains Reserve—Establishment of a Storage Depot at Karachi.

(4) Use of river and road transport for movement of foodgrains. This is being done in Bengal.

(5) Constitution of Expert Advisory Panel; under discussion.

(6) Foodgrains Control Order. Improvement in the form and administration of this Order has been under constant consideration. Further proposals have been received and are under examination.

It must be remembered that the Policy Committee's recommendations were considered only in the middle of October. But progress is being made daily and we hope to report significant results at each successive session of the Legislature.

As regards rationing, the Honourable the Food Member has already announced that we are going to introduce rationing in Delhi in the near future. So far as information is available with us, rationing of some sort is already in operation in practically every province in India.

In Bombay Presidency.—Rationing is already in force in: Bombay City, Poona, Kirkee and it is shortly to be introduced in Ahmedabad.

Madras Presidency.—Rationing is already in force in: Madras City, Malabar, Salem, Coimbatore, Saidapet, Vizagapatam and is contemplated in the Nilgris, Cuddapah District and Tinnevelly.

Bengal Presidency.—Rationing schemes are already in operation in: Dacca, Faridpur, Serajgunj.

In Calcutta and the surrounding industrial areas rationing will be introduced in the very near future.

Bihar.—It has been decided to introduce rationing as soon as possible in no less than 15 of the main towns and industrial areas in Bihar.

Sind.—Arrangements are complete for the introduction of rationing in Karachi.

U. P.—Rationing of up to 60 per cent. of the population of all larger towns in the U. P. is already in operation. It is intended that the schemes at present in force should be expanded to cover 100 per cent. of the urban population in the near future.

Orissa.—Rationing is already in force in Cuttack and Sambalpur.

Assam.—Certain articles not including rice are rationed in Shillong.

C. P.—In Nagpur an incomplete rationing scheme is already in force.

N. W. F. P.—Rationing is in force in Peshawar.

Baluchistan.—Quetta-Pishin is a rationed area.

Besides the above, the administered areas of Bangalore City and C. & M. Station and Ajmer Merwara are rationed.

Indian States.—The information available regarding rationing in the Indian States is also incomplete, but rationing is in force in:

Cochin, Travancore, Indore, Bhopal, Gwalior, Junagadh, Dewas Sr., Bajna, Cutch, Rajkot, Vithal-Gadh State.

In Mysore rationing is to be introduced in both urban and rural areas.

In the course of the debate this morning, one Honourable Member said that there was no necessity for rationing in surplus areas. Sir, the very object of rationing is to distribute the surplus equitably all over the area and if the Punjab has got a surplus it is all the more reason that they should be rationed so that the surplus there may increase and be made available for distribution in the deficit areas.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Where is the deficit area now?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: There is deficit in many provinces in India, as must be well known to the Honourable Member.

As regards the *aman* procurement, the Honourable the Food Member has given the scheme in general outline. But the subject is so important that I am sure Honourable Members would like to know a little more of the details of the scheme. With your permission, Sir, I shall give some details.

As the Honourable the Food Member has just explained, at the very basis of the *Aman* Procurement Scheme that we have evolved for Bengal lies our anxiety for re-establishment of confidence in the country side. This we propose to do by reducing the quantity for procurement by the Government Agency to the absolute

[Mr. B. R. Sen.]

minimum in the following way: by taking Calcutta off the Bengal market by arranging to import into Bengal a quantity of foodgrains equivalent to the requirements of Calcutta for 13 months' (including one month's reserve); by allowing the normal trade to function under strict control for normal internal trade within the district; and by linking a deficit district to a specified surplus district and licensing traders in a deficit district to procure specific quotas from the surplus district. All that the Government Procurement Agency will have to handle will be the requirements of essential services and rationed areas outside Calcutta and a certain quantity for a Provincial Reserve to meet emergent demands. Consequently, the Government procurement organisation will exert no undue pressure on the market.

A further factor which will assist in lowering of prices generally will be the limitation of competition in the market. This will be made effective by the rationing of urban and industrial areas; the elimination of all large consumers, such as essential services and industries; control over movement from the surplus to the deficit areas; and control over purchases in a district for consumption within the district.

A word of explanation is necessary in regard to control over purchases in a district for consumption within that district.

It is proposed to lay down the principle that in the licenses issued to traders covering transactions within a district, the quantity which may be purchased and also the quantity which may be sold on private account should be specified. The latter quantity will be fixed with reference to the requirements of the area that a trader normally serves. If a trader is permitted to purchase under his license in excess of the amount he is permitted to sell on private account, that surplus must be held by him at the disposal of Government. This in effect will mean the rationing of the entire province and at the same time is expected to discourage speculative buying and hoarding by traders.

The Price Control policy of Government of Bengal has already been announced, and it will be very rigidly enforced.

As to the procurement agency, it is proposed to appoint a limited number of firms of unquestioned standing and resources to operate under the direction of a Purchasing Board. The Board will consist of representatives of the Bengal Government, the trade including the Purchasing Agents and also consumers. Each agent will be allotted specific districts and in no district more than one agent will operate. Although the working of the organisation should extend throughout Bengal, it is proposed to lay down as a definite policy that no exports shall be allowed from the deficit districts. Purchases, if any, in a deficit district will be made in the surplus areas of that district for consumption within the district as a whole.

One of the most difficult aspects of the situation is likely to be a disinclination on the part of the cultivator to bring his entire surplus to the market. Steps must be taken to see that the cultivators offer for sale any surpluses they may have over and above their own requirements. In this connection, the Bengal Government propose to carry out a widespread propaganda campaign and to use to the maximum extent Co-operative Societies as agents for purchasing direct from cultivators.

The greatest importance is being attached to the building up of an adequate organisation throughout the Province for effective enforcement of the Foodgrains Control Order which forms the basis of any successful scheme of control. In fact we propose to suggest to the Bengal Government that an officer of the standing of a Divisional Commissioner or a Deputy Inspector General of Police should be placed in charge of this work and should be made responsible for building up the organisation.

Sir, in my opening remarks I stated the seven cardinal points of the policy which Government have now evolved. These points will bear repetition. These are:—

(1) Prohibition of Exports.
(2) Procurement of Imports.
(3) Extension of Urban rationing.
(4) Rigid enforcement of the Foodgrains Control Order.

(5) Improvement of the procurement machinery.
(6) Price control.
(7) Association of informed public opinion with the working of the Food Department.

The foundation of the entire policy lies in the assumption of responsibility by the Centre to mobilise the food resources of India and in the discharge of that responsibility to exercise whatever degree of superintendence and control at every stage as may be necessary or to invoke and use whatever powers are essential to ensure success.

Sir, the debates in this House have confirmed that we have the unanimous support of all sections of people in the country in this policy. Will the leaders of public opinion all over India join us in a common endeavour to make the working of this policy so far as they are concerned a success ?

Sir, I need hardly say that the food problem in India is not one which will end with a good harvest in some parts of the areas which are now in the grip of a famine. It is a problem which is closely connected with the War and will continue not only during the War, but so long as the dislocation and destruction caused by it all over the world are not sufficiently repaired.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Honourable Members, the Honourable the Food Member has very kindly relieved me of the disagreeable task of selecting or giving priority to the three amendments which have been placed before this House for being passed. I agree with the Honourable the Food Member that this is not an opportune time to make an inquiry and I would therefore not detain the Council much longer but would recommend to Honourable Members kindly to accept the Honourable the Food Member's suggestion and agree to accept amendment No. 2 which meets all the circumstances and difficulties at the present time. If that is done, you have the satisfaction that at least one particular amendment has been passed by this House. You will remember that in the other House all three amendments of a similar kind had an unfortunate fate. I would like, therefore, to know from the Leaders of Parties what they propose to do.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : So far as I have been able to find out, the opinion of the members of my Party is not in favour of the Honourable Mr. Parker's amendment which will postpone the inquiry for several years.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : No, no, not for several years. It does not say so.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : It will come to that in practice. An inquiry will then be absolutely valueless. Whether a Royal Commission is appointed or whether a Committee is appointed by the Government of India, I do not think it will be of much use a few years hence.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA : Suitable date is the word used.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : We all understand what 'suitable date' means. It cannot be before the termination of the war.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : As worldly men all Honourable Members must realise that this would be a thoroughly unsuitable time to divert men who are doing very useful work in famine-stricken areas and bring them here for assisting Honourable Members to discharge their functions here. I strongly appeal to Honourable Members that the best alternative is to accept the amendment which is of an innocuous character or if you are unwilling the best thing is not to move any amendment. I am in your hands entirely. I shall carry out your suggestion in case you reach agreement. I give you this advice which I think is in the interests of the House.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL : It is better if we do not move any amendments.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : If you are dissatisfied with all amendments, do not move any amendment.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : The Chair has placed us in a very embarrassing position. We had thought about the matter before an amendment was tabled on behalf of our Party by the Honourable Mr. Sapru. We

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

had to decide whether we would postpone the enquiry for some years or in spite of the inconveniences attendent on an immediate enquiry ask for the appointment of a committee now in order to go into the whole question. These were the questions which were debated in the Assembly and we had therefore full time to think over the matter before making up our minds. In view of the fact that an enquiry a few years hence would be of absolutely no value, our support of Mr. Parker's amendment will place us in an extremely awkward position. I do not question the motives of my Honourable friend Mr. Parker. In his own way he is as anxious as anybody else that steps should be taken to prevent a repetition of the mistakes that have unfortunately led to the ruin of hundreds, thousands and millions of lives in Bengal. Nevertheless considering the immediate purpose of the amendment, we cannot but come to the conclusion that it will be of absolutely no avail. Notwithstanding your appeal, Sir, to which I paid the most respectful attention, we are unable to accede to your wishes. It is very painful to us to have to do so, but I hope you will realise that the view which we take of our duty at this juncture that compels us to do so.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: My Party also does not find it possible either to withdraw their amendment or support the amendment of Mr. Parker. I would only suggest that as mine is the most comprehensive amendment it might be put to the vote first.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I understand that there is no agreement between the Parties. Under these circumstances the sane policy is to accept this amendment or you should make any alteration in it and come to an agreement.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: We considered that matter. At any rate I personally talked over that matter with Mr. Parker and the Honourable Mr. Dalal. But we were unfortunately unable to come to any agreement. I mention this, Sir, in order to assure you that we have ourselves explored all possible means of arriving at an agreed solution on the question before us. But in view of the fact that we on this side of the House want an immediate enquiry and Mr. Parker would have it some time later, there was no common ground on which we could meet. As regards our amendment, you appealed to us not to move it. But I would respectfully draw your attention to the fact that the amendment of our Party has already been moved by Mr. Sapru.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I suggested withdrawal.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: If we withdraw the amendment it will mean that we have changed our opinion and we would be stultifying ourselves. Withdrawal would indicate that we had altered our opinion, voting against Mr. Parker's amendment, and the other would indicate that we did not know our own mind.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I understand that there is no agreement between the parties. Honourable Members, I would draw your attention to Standing Order 66:

"When an amendment to any Resolution is moved or when two or more such amendments are moved, the President shall, before taking the sense of the Council thereon, state or read to the Council the terms of the original motion and of the amendments proposed.

(2) It shall be in the discretion of the President to put first to the vote either the original motion or any of the amendments which may have been brought forward."

I shall exercise my discretion and in view of the disagreement between the Parties, I shall take Mr. Parker's amendment first and place it before the House. If that is rejected, then I shall put Mr. Sapru's amendment, and lastly the third amendment.

Mr. Parker's amendment runs thus:—

"That to the motion the following be added, namely:—

'And that this House is of opinion that at a suitable date an enquiry should take place to examine the whole question of the food shortage in India and in particular in Bengal. The enquiry should be conducted by a suitable body of the type of a Royal Commission and its personnel should be completely outside the field of Indian politics. Its terms of reference should cover a full examination of the present food shortage and the making of recommendations to prevent the recurrence of the existing distress.'"

The Council divided :—

AYES—24.

Bozman, Hon. Mr. G. S.
Burder, Hon. Mr. J. H.
Charanjit Singh, Hon. Raja.
Chinoy, Hon. Sir Rahimtoola.
Commander-in-Chief, His Excellency the.
Conran-Smith, Hon. Mr. E.
Das, Hon. Mr. Mahendra Lal.
Devadoss, Hon. Sir David.
Ghosal, Hon. Sir Josna.
Hissamuddin Bahadur, Hon. Lt.-Col. Sir.
Hydari, Hon. Mr. M. S. A.
Jogendra Singh, Hon. Sir.
Jones, Hon. Mr. C. E.
Lal, Hon. Mr. Shavax A.
Mahomed Usman, Hon. Sir.
Menon, Hon. Sir Ramunni.
Mukherjee, Hon. Sir Satya Charan.
Parker, Hon. Mr. R. H.
Patro, Hon. Sir A. P.
Pillai, Hon. Mr. N. R.
Prior, Hon. Sir H. C.
Roy, Hon. Sir Satyendra Nath.
Sen, Hon. Mr. B. R.
Sobha Singh, Hon. Sardar Bahadur.

NOES—19.

Abdool Sattar, Hon. Mr. Abdool Razak Hajee.
Ali Asgar Khan, Hon. Maulvi.
Ayyangar, Hon. Sir N. Gopalaswami.
Buta Singh, Hon. Sardar, Sir.
Chettiyar, Hon. Mr. Chidambaram.
Dalal, Hon. Mr. M. N.
Das, Hon. Mr. N. K.
Hossain Imam, Hon. Mr.
Kalikar, Hon. Mr. V. V.
Kunzru, Hon. Pandit Hirday Nath.
Mahtha, Hon. Rai Bahadur Sri Narain.
Motilal, Hon. Mr. G. S.
Padshah Sahib Bahadur, Hon. Saiyed Mohamed.
Ram Saran Das, Hon. Rai Bahadur Lala.
Ray Chaudhury, Hon. Mr. Kumarsankar.
Roy Chowdhury, Hon. Mr. Susil Kumar.
Sapru, Hon. Mr. P. N.
Sinha, Hon. Kumar Nripendra Narayan.
Yuveraj Datta Singh, Hon. Raja.

The Motion was adopted.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : All elected Indian Members have voted against the Government.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Have you got anything to say regarding the course of business ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN (Leader of the House): No Sir.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The House is adjourned till Wednesday, 24th November. I would inform Honourable Members that tomorrow is the last day of the session and I am very anxious to finish all the Resolutions which appear on the list.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, the 24th November, 1943.

APPENDIX.

(*Vide* page 204.)

EXTRACT FROM "BENGAL GOVERNMENT AND THE ISPAHANIS".

Extracts from Speeches in the Bengal Legislative Assembly.

(Honourable Minister of Civil Supplies.)

14th July, 1943—

Now, Sir, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee having got that information from somewhere stated that Mr. Ispahani is contesting the proposition that he cannot buy on his own account. Our terms of agreement are that he cannot buy on his account as long as he continues to be the agent of the Government of Bengal. The terms have been arranged and have passed through both our solicitors and have been agreed to right from the beginning that he can make no purchases on his own account and he can make no purchases on the account of others except with the consent of the Director for Civil Supplies. He has been allowed to make purchases on behalf of the Government of India. The Government of India have utilised his services to make purchases outside the eastern zone in many places and they have done so on terms far more favourable than we have given them and they have done so without security without which it seems no business can be transacted.

16th September, 1943—

My offer to the Opposition to examine their accounts and their papers has not been accepted, and yet the whisperings continue. Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has interjected that he accepted the offer but that I did not implement my promise. Let me tell the House what actually happened. Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee came to my house and told me that he had certain figures in his pocket to show that rice had been purchased at a lower price than probably had been charged by Messrs. Ispahanis. He himself could not say whether the prices were different. I told him that he was at liberty to examine all the books of accounts and papers of Messrs. Ispahanis, and that I would send with him an officer of Government to see that he had all facilities. Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee would not accept my offer and stated that he wanted me to fetch all the books and accounts and papers of Messrs. Ispahanis, and then he would examine it, not at their office but anywhere else. It was obvious that I could not accept

his suggestion. Probably he did not proceed further because I pointed out to him that there were three accountants at the office of Messrs. Ispahanis who were going through all his books of accounts, papers and documents, all the letters and advices from his agents and the contracts and had made a meticulous inspection of the transactions. But I wish to repeat my offer once more in case Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee changes his mind and is still prepared to examine the books of accounts and papers and documents of Messrs. Ispahanis, and with my offer my appeal for co-operation in our policy and bring down prices and make foodgrains available to the public.

(Honourable the Chief Minister.)

23rd September, 1943—

The Governments of Assam and Bihar and the Government of India—they have all their sole agents and I claim that the commission that is being paid by us to Messrs. Ispahani will compare favourably with the commission that is being paid by the Government of India and others. Immediately after appointing Ispahanis I travelled with the Regional Commissioner to Assam and I remember on more than one occasion he said—he knew about the rice position in Bengal better than anybody else—that the only consideration that we must have was to get rice at any price in Bengal. The price factor would come in later on but at the time we had to get rice.

Then I come to another point but I shall not go into details. I will ask the honourable members to consider honestly and conscientiously what I am saying and then to judge whether Messrs. Ispahanis could possibly have done the mean things that have been alleged by the Opposition. It is a simple fact which will be easily grasped by everybody and as Ispahanis' appointment has been discussed all over India, I hope everyone will judge it from what I shall say now. I believe it has been admitted by Dr. Sanyal himself that Messrs. Ispahanis at the time of free trade bought rice at an average price of Rs. 14-8-0 for 2½ lakh maunds which they sold to Government. Now at that time the ruling price in Bengal was Rs. 30, and over, per maund. Without incurring opprobrium, without incurring any risk, without being criticised by some as being greedy, they could have been the benefactors and they could have come to the Government of Bengal and said 'Here we have 2½ lakh maunds of rice for sale'. The Government of Bengal would have gone down on their bended knees and would have paid them Rs. 30 or any price, without question. Any man who would have come to the Government of Bengal at that time and said 'I have got 2½ lakh maunds of rice to sell at Rs. 30'—the Government of Bengal would have closed the bargain without question. Sir, Ispahanis could have made about 37 lakhs by that one transaction.

(Mr. A. R. Siddiqi.)

27th September, 1943—

Ispahanis had to be coaxed by the present Government and persuaded to take up the onerous task. The previous Government had created no organisation of its own to collect rice from inside and outside Bengal. No Indian or European business house would take up the work either on the ground of lack of organisation or the narrowness of the margin of profits.

(Mr. J. R. Walker.)

27th September, 1943—

The question of the appointment of the firm of Ispahani as sole Government agents during the free trade period had been made an issue by the Opposition, and many allegations had been made against that firm. It was a fact that several other firms were approached to take the agency but were unable to accept because they felt that their organizations were inadequate to undertake the work and, in fact, they suggested that Messrs. Ispahani was the only firm with the requisite organization. In normal circumstances they would have agreed that it was certainly not desirable that one firm should be appointed as sole Government agents. Criticism against the firm was unfair and was inspired by political motives.

(Honourable Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee as Minister of Food.)

26th March, 1943—

The net result of the contracts was that no party was agreeable to undertake the scheme to remove the surplus rice to safer districts. In the end Mr. Ispahani was called upon as the senior partner of Messrs. Ispahani & Co. and the scheme was put before him and he was asked whether he would undertake to do the work. He refused it at first, mentioning, in particular, that he belonged to a party which was for the time being in opposition to the party in power and to undertake a Government scheme of this nature might be misunderstood. Then the position was explained to him that the Government of India were financing the scheme and that it was in the interests of this province that the surplus should be saved and not allowed to fall in the hands of the enemy. Eventually Mr. Ispahani agreed.

Wednesday, 24th November, 1943

The Council met in the Council Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NUMBER OF INDIAN AND BRITISH OFFICERS IN THE CANTONMENTS DEPARTMENT.

147. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (on behalf of the Honourable Mr. P. N. Sapru): (*i*) Will Government state the number of (*a*) Indian officers and (*b*) British officers in the Cantonments Department excluding those serving in the Cantonment Executive Officers Service?

(*ii*) What is the number of permanent and temporary officers in the Cantonments Department?

(*iii*) What is the number of Indians and Britishers in permanent and temporary vacancies?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH, Home Secretary (on behalf of Defence Department): (*i*) (*a*) Six. (*b*) Twenty-two, including three officers released for temporary military duty.

(*ii*) Permanent—Twenty-one.
Temporary—Seven.
(*iii*) Indians, Permanent—Three.
Temporary—Three.
Britishers, Permanent—Eighteen.
Temporary—Four.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: Do these figures represent the numbers or the percentages?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: The question asked for numbers, and the answer gives the numbers.

RE-EMPLOYMENT OF RETIRED BRITISH OFFICERS IN THE CANTONMENTS DEPARTMENT.

148. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (on behalf of the Honourable Mr. P. N. Sapru): Will Government state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that retired British officers, who had been given several extensions of service, continue to be re-employed in the Cantonments Department;

(*b*) the number of such officers re-employed by them in the Cantonments Department;

(*c*) whether it is a fact that most of the work of the Military Estates Officers is done by the Cantonment Executive Officers;

(*d*) the names of the local agents of the Military Estates Officers;

(*e*) the method of recruitment followed for the Military Estate Officers;

(*f*) what opportunities Cantonment Executive Officers have for appointment as Military Estates Officers when a vacancy occurs; and

(*g*) the scale of pay for Military Estates Officers and that prescribed for Cantonment Executive Officers?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH (on behalf of Defence Department): (*a*) and (*b*). Yes. One retired British Officer has been given two extensions each of a year's duration. Two others who have recently retired have each been re-employed for a further period of a year.

(*c*) No.

(*d*) With the exception of the headquarters stations of Military Estates Officers, Executive Officers are the local agents of these Officers for the purposes of collection of revenue and the prevention of encroachments only, in all other Cantonments.

(*e*) and (*f*). In peace time only King's and Indian Commissioned and Viceroy's Commissioned officers of the Indian Army, who have fully qualified for retention in the Indian Army and have rendered over 5 years but less than 12 years commissioned service, are eligible for appointment to the Department. During the present emergency, such recruitment not being possible, Cantonment Executive Officers are appointed to officiate when vacancies occur.

(*g*) For *Military Estates Officers*, the same as is admissible to King's and Indian commissioned officers of the Indian Army *plus* departmental pay admissible after certain fixed periods of service in the Department varying from Rs. 125 to Rs. 300 p. m. in the case of King's commissioned officers and from Rs. 40 to Rs. 130 p.m. in the case of Viceroy's commissioned officers.

The scale of pay for the three Viceroy's commissioned officers holding the honorary rank of Captain employed as permanent Military Estates Officers is Rs. 400—20—800 p. m. *plus* the departmental pay admissible.

Cantonment Executive Officers who are appointed to officiate as Military Estates Officers in the present emergency receive a duty allowance of Rs. 100 p. m. in addition to their pay as Executive Officer.

For *Cantonment Executive Officers*—

Grade I.—Rs. 300—10—400 E. B.—10—500, with a selection grade Rs. 500—20—700.

Grade II.—Rs. 150—5—200 E. B.—5—250, with a selection grade Rs. 250—10—350.

NUMBER OF DETENUS IN CENTRALLY ADMINISTERED AREAS.

149. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (on behalf of the Honourable Mr. P. N. Sapru): (*a*) Will Government state the number of detenus in Centrally Administered Areas?

(*b*) Is there any machinery for revising their cases? If so, what?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: (*a*) The total number of persons actually undergoing detention in Centrally Administered Areas on 15th October, 1943, the latest date for which information is available, was 116.

(*b*) The cases of all Security Prisoners are reviewed from time to time by the authorities concerned to ensure that no person is kept in custody longer than is necessary.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: May I know who are the authorities concerned?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: In Chief Commissioners' Provinces, clearly the Chief Commissioners.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: How is action taken in the case of those persons who are detained under the orders of the Government of India or the authorities directly under them but kept in provincial jails?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: I do not think that question arises. The question on the paper deals with the number of persons detained in Centrally Administered Areas, and that is the question which I have answered.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Is it not clear that the question relates to persons detained under the authority of the Government of India or of one of the Administrations directly under them?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: I do not read the question that way. It refers to the total number of persons actually undergoing detention in Centrally Administered Areas.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Is it not clear that, as the question is one which has been addressed to the Central Government, it relates only to the detenus detained under their authority?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: I do not agree with the Honourable Member. The question is perfectly clear. It asks for the number of persons detained in Centrally Administered Areas, and Governors' provinces are not Centrally Administered Areas.

REASON FOR SENDING A DEPUTATION TO ENGLAND AND THE U. S. A. TO EXPLAIN INDIA'S WAR EFFORT.

150. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (on behalf of the Honourable Mr. P. N. Sapru): Will Government state the reasons for sending a deputation to England and the U. S. A. for explaining India's war effort?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: The main reasons are:—

(1) The Government of India are satisfied that there is a demand in United States of America and United Kingdom for speakers from India having

an up-to-date knowledge of actual facts about the country's war-time activities, and

(2) Government of India consider it desirable in the interests of this country that her war effort should be fully known and appreciated in United States of America and United Kingdom.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: Will Government kindly state whether any deputations have come to India from other countries to explain their war effort to us ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: I must ask for notice of the question.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: May I inquire whether the Agent-General of the Government of India in the United States of America and their Publicity Department there could not between themselves give all the information that was required ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: But they themselves asked for this deputation.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Who asked ? The United States Government ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: No. The Agent-General of the Government of India in the United States.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Could the Honourable Member give us any information with regard to the reasons on which this request was based ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: He wanted that we should tell America what India is doing towards the war effort. It is in the best interests of the country that we should do so. There is a great deal of ignorance, and people in America did not know what exactly India is doing towards the war effort. The Agent-General thought that we should send somebody there so that the American public may be told what India was doing in the way of the war effort.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Did the Agent-General of the Government of India in the United States ask for a non-official deputation which would give expression to the non-official views in the country ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: Yes.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: He asked for a non-official deputation which would give expression to non-official views in the country as regards the war ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: A non-official deputation was asked for.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: If all that was desired was to give information about the war activities in India to the American and British public, why could not officials be deputed to undertake that job ? Either serving officials or retired officials could well have been entrusted with the job.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: A non-official deputation would do the job much better.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Was the request based on the desire to give a wrong picture of the political situation prevailing in the country ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: The deputation has nothing to do with the political situation at all.

REPRESENTATION FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES OF THE AYURVEDIC COLLEGE OF THE BENARES HINDU UUNIVERSITY.

151. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (on behalf of the Honourable Mr. P. N. Sapru): (*a*) Will Government state whether it has received any representation from the Association of Graduates of the Ayurvedic College of the Benares Hindu University requesting that their Degree may be recognised as equivalent to L. M. P. or L. C. P. S. and that they may be given a chance of being recruited for Military Medical Service at this time ?

(*b*) If so, what action do Government propose to take on it ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDERA SINGH: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The question of recognition of the degree as the equivalent of a licentiate qualification is a matter for the Provincial Medical Councils and Provincial Governments to consider under the provisions of the various Provincial Medical Acts. Only those licentiate qualifications which entitle a person to registration under the Provincial Medical Acts are recognised for the purpose of recruitment to the Army Medical Services.

SITUATION IN REGARD TO FOOD AND CLOTH IN BALASORE DISTRICT IN ORISSA.

152. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (on behalf of the HONOURABLE Mr. P. N. Sapru): Will Government make a statement on the situation in regard to food and cloth in Balasore District in Orissa?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: *Food.*—A statement on the subject has already been made by me in reply to the Motion on the food situation.

Cloth.—There is no longer scarcity of cloth in the district. Standard cloth has been distributed amongst the poor in North Balasore and has brought much needed relief. The Provincial Government are undertaking vigorous distribution of standard cloth during the next fortnight.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: When did the distribution of cloth in North Balasore take place?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Only recently, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Can the Honourable Member tell us approximately in what month and between what dates?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: 6,089,707 yards of standard cloth had been delivered to Orissa on 12th November, 1943.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: That may have been delivered to Orissa, but I should like to know what part of it was distributed among the destitutes in the North Balasore district and when it was distributed.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: I am afraid I have not got the information.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Can the Honourable Member tell us the date when the cloth was distributed among the destitutes in the North Balasore district?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: It must have been very recently.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Was the distribution free of charge in the North Balasore district?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Sir, I will ask for notice.

NEWS OF INDIAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN JAPANESE HANDS.

153. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (*a*) Is it a fact that so far as could be ascertained, there are about 75,000 Indian troops as prisoners of war in Japanese hands; but practically there has been no news of their fate?

(*b*) Is it a fact that no representative of the protecting power, and the International Red Cross has been allowed by Japan to visit the camps, in which the Indian prisoners of war are detained?

(*c*) Is it a fact that food, clothing and medical supplies, etc., dispatched by the Red Cross are not allowed to be delivered to the Indian prisoners of war in Japanese hands?

(*d*) Will Government state the number of Japanese prisoners in Allies hands, to whom similar treatment could be meted out?

(*e*) Is there any truth in report that the agents of Japan are attempting, but without success, to tamper with the loyalty of these Indian prisoners of war, and training them to fight against the Allies in the coming months?

(*f*) As a counter measure do Government propose to recruit an overwhelming number of Indian troops to bear down any such mischievous move, and carry the Burma campaign to a speedy and successful victory?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: I lay a statement on the table.

Statement.

(*a*) There are approximately 76,000 Indian Troops who are Prisoners of War or are believed to be Prisoners of War, in Japanese hands. Of this total some 5,000 belonged to the Hongkong and Singapore Royal Artillery.

Despite every effort made on the part of Protecting Powers and delegates of the International Red Cross Committee, information regarding the fate of these prisoners and the conditions under which they are being held, has been withheld deliberately by the Japanese.

Amongst civilised peoples it has always been a well accepted convention that, in order to relieve the anxieties of relatives, not only are the names of Prisoners of War published as soon as possible, but full facilities are always accorded to the Protecting Power and the Red Cross to ensure, as far as is possible under the trying conditions of restraint, the well-being of those unfortunate enough to be made Prisoners of War. The Japanese have deemed fit to ignore these conventions.

(*b*) There is not the slightest doubt that representatives of the Protecting Power and the Red Cross have not been given the proper facilities to visit camps in which Indian Prisoners of War are detained. So far as can be ascertained certain other camps containing European Prisoners of War have been visited, but there is good evidence to show that, even where visits have been permitted, they were carefully conducted, the representatives being allowed to see only that which the Japanese considered desirable. There is at least one incident on record, where the representative immediately on conclusion of his visit, was asked to sign a report on the Camp conditions, this report having already been prepared by the Japanese themselves.

Information coming from a variety of unimpeachable sources leaves no doubt that the conditions in practically all camps are unsatisfactory. It is abundantly clear that in general Japanese Prisoners of War are not in keeping with the practice of civilised nations.

(*c*) Food, clothing and medicine supplies despatched by the Red Cross have been set aside for Indian Prisoners of War in localities where they are known to be situated. These supplies have been handed over to the Japanese Military Authorities for distribution. Packages containing these supplies have been specially prepared and contain in particular, a liberal supply of medical comforts, as it is known that many of the prisoners are suffering from malaria and also from other diseases due to the poor quality and insufficiency of the food given to them.

In the case of certain camps it is known that the Japanese medical arrangements are so in lifferent (in some cases practically non-existent) that every effort is being made to forward medical supplies. In the absence of reports from impartial observers who are not being granted the customary facilities, no guarantee can be given that these supplies are definitely reaching the prisoners.

The Government of India and His Majesty's Government have made, and are continuing to make, strong protests regarding the lack of these facilities. So far these protests have been without avail.

(*d*) It is not in the public interest to disclose the exact number of Japanese Prisoners of War in our hands, but it can be stated that the number is small in comparison with the numbers of Indian Prisoners of War in Japanese hands. It should be remembered that, in the eyes of the Japanese military authorities, Japanese soldiers who are taken prisoner are regarded as dead. The Japanese Government in keeping with this survival of barbarism takes no further interest in their welfare and would not be influenced in the slightest by threats of retaliation.

(*e*) It is true that the Japanese and their agents are attempting to tamper with the loyalty of Indian Prisoners of War. The Japanese also claim that they are training Indian Prisoners of War with the intention that they should fight against the United Nations. The methods to which the Japanese have resorted in their attempts to stubborn these Prisoners of War when propaganda methods failed have in many cases been brutal and there are numerous cases of men being deprived of food and locked away in solitary confinement. Many Prisoners of War who have been subjected to this treatment have fortunately returned to India, having in some cases been clever enough to deceive the Japanese regarding their real intentions. Their reports leave no doubts whatever regarding Japanese brutality and callousness.

(*f*) The Honourable Member may rest assured that all necessary counter-measures are being taken. It will be fully appreciated that it would not be in the interests of security to reveal what these counter-measures are.

COUNTRIES OF THE TROOPS SERVING IN INDIA.

154. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: (*a*) What are the countries from where troops have been brought to India?

(*b*) Are there any South African troops in India? If so, have they come to this country at the request or with the consent of the Government of India?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: (*a*) Troops from the United Kingdom, Africa, the United States of America and China are at present in India.

(*b*) There are no South African troops in India. All troops from outside India have come here with the consent of the Government of India.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Will His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief tell us what is the composition of the troops that have come from Africa. I suppose they are from East Africa.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: They are not from South Africa.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Are they from East Africa?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: Some.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Do the troops consist only of Europeans or do they contain also the indigenous troops?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: That information has already been given in the Press. They consist of natives of various parts of Africa and there have been one or two notices in the press about this. I cannot give in detail the composition. It would not be in the public interest.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Why has it been necessary to import these troops when plenty of fighting material is available in India? About 2 million men have been trained since the commencement of the war.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: The reason is that these troops have certain special qualifications for the work for which they are required. Another reason is that these troops have been in existence for some time; they were trained originally for other purposes but were not wanted for those purposes, and they then became available at a time when other troops were not available.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Is there such a deficiency of Indian troops that the Government of India asked for troops from East Africa to come to this country?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: I do not think that question arises.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Are they surplus to our needs or are they required by us?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: They are required for the purposes of the war like all other troops.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Are they here because the Army would otherwise have been in inadequate strength or are they here because the Indian troops are distrusted?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: I think the Honourable Member knows as well as I do that the greatest possible trust is placed in Indian troops wherever they are employed. The answer is in the negative.

NUMBER OF INDIAN AND BRITISH OFFICERS IN THE INDIAN ARTILLERY.

155. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: What is the number of Indian and British officers, respectively, in the Indian Artillery who have been (*a*) sent to the Staff College for training in staff work, or (*b*) appointed as staff officers for training purposes?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: (*a*) Since the outbreak of the war four officers (three Indian officers and one British officer) of the Indian Artillery have attended courses at the Staff College.

(*b*) The figures relating to the number of officers attached to lower formations for Staff training, are not readily available and their collection would involve an expenditure of time and labour which would not be justifiable in war-time.

PROPORTION OF INDIAN AND BRITISH OFFICERS IN THE INTELLIGENCE CORPS.

156. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: What is the proportion of Indian to British officers in the Intelligence Corps?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: The proportion of Indian to British officers in the Intelligence Corps is 1 Indian to 4·5 British.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Why is the Indian proportion so low?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: That is a very difficult question to answer. The proportion of Indian to British officers in the Indian Army as a whole is 1 to 3·7 British and the proportion of the officers in the Intelligence Corps is 1 to 4·5. That is not a very great difference really.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Is it a fact that the Intelligence Corps was started very recently—only a few months ago?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: No. It has been in existence for some time, so far as I know. The Intelligence Corps must have been started, not necessarily under that name, from the commencement of the war.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR : Are not suitable Indians available for this Corps ?

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF : Any suitable Indians that are available are used.

CONDITION OF PROFESSOR N. K. NIGAM, A SECURITY PRISONER.

157. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : (*a*) Will Government state whether it is a fact that Professor N. K. Nigam, M.A., of Delhi, who is detained under Rule 26 of the D. I. R., is suffering from intestinal tuberculosis and is lying seriously ill in the Mayo Hospital, Lahore ?

(*b*) Did he send an application to the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, for permission to be privately treated by Dr. N. C. Joshi of Delhi ?

(*c*) If the answers to (*a*) and (*b*) are in the affirmative, what action have Government taken or propose to take in the matter ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : (*a*) The person named is believed to be suffering from a tubercular complaint and was recently transferred, under the orders of the proper authorities in the Punjab, from the jail in that Province where he was detained to the Mayo Hospital, Lahore. It is understood, however, that the treatment prescribed for him in hospital can be just as well given in jail and that the hospital authorities have recommended that he should be returned to jail. It seems therefore that he is not seriously ill.

(*b*) He applied to the Chief Commissioner in January last to be retransferred to Delhi Jail with a view to his treatment by a private medical practitioner of his own choice, but the application was not granted.

(*c*) His health will continue to be carefully watched.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Has he improved since he was sent to the Mayo Hospital ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : I have no information as to the present condition of his health, but presumably as the authorities concerned consider he could be safely treated in jail it is a fair assumption that his health is improving.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : When did the authorities in charge of the Mayo Hospital recommend his retransfer to the jail ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : I must ask for notice of that, Sir.

RELEASE OF, AND RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON, CONGRESS DETENUS IN DELHI.

158. THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : (*a*) Will Government state whether they scrutinised the cases of the Congress detenus of Delhi with a view to releasing those detenus whose detention was no longer justified ? If so, how many detenus have they released ?

(*b*) On how many of them have orders been served restricting their movements and requiring them to report themselves to the police station in their wards thrice a week ? Are there any ladies among the released detenus on whom such orders have been served ? If so, how many ?

(*c*) In view of the changed conditions in the country, do Government propose to revise these orders so as to free the released detenus, particularly the ladies, from the above-mentioned restrictions ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : (*a*) As a result of scrutiny by the Chief Commissioner 41 security prisoners of the Delhi Province have been released from detention since August 9th, 1943.

(*b*) Restrictive orders of the nature mentioned by the Honourable Member were passed against 35 of these persons, including 1 lady. The latter order has however, since been relaxed and there is now no restriction on the lady's movements.

(*c*) In a number of these cases the restrictions have already been relaxed by the Chief Commissioner, and I have no doubt that he will continue to do this wherever possible.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : Will the Government of India interest themselves in the matter and see that the removal of restrictions is speeded up ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : The Government of India have interested themselves in the matter, and will continue to be interested.

NOTICE OF MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Honourable Members, I have received a notice of adjournment motion from Mr. Hossain Imam. I will read to you the notice.

"I wish to move the adjournment of this House to consider a matter of definite urgent public importance, namely, the terms of the Government of India's order under section 126A to the Sind Government."

Mr. Hossain Imam, you have to satisfy me that this motion at this stage is in order.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa: Muhammadan): Mr. President, we did not know the exact terms of the order issued by the Government of India. Only yesterday in the course of the debate, Sir J. P. Srivastava read out to us the order. I wish to move the adjournment, because after his speech we had no chance of getting the situation clarified; that is why I have given notice of this adjournment.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: What is there to clarify?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Clarify the extent to which the Government of India wishes to interfere with the provincial administrations.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The scope of the order was mentioned in the House yesterday by the Food Member. As far as I remember, he said that the orders to the Sind Government are that no alteration should be made in the rate without the approval of the Government of India. That was clear enough. What more is wanted?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I have therefore used the words "terms of the order", because Government itself has not defined what it wants to prohibit. I will read out the words in the telegram—"that they shall not amend or cancel the orders of the Sind Government now in force." Do they prohibit amendment or cancellation. They are not clear and therefore they have specified both things.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I am not concerned with that.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: May I just urge, before you give a ruling, that it is for the Government Member—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: It is not for the Government Member. If you read the Standing Order, it is for the President first to decide whether the Motion is in order. Then he can place it before the House.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: May I humbly submit to you that there are three requisites. The matter must be definite, it must be urgent and thirdly it must be of specific public interest.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I agree with you.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: It is definite; it is urgent because there was no time yesterday and it is in the public interest. That also I think you will decide in my favour.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I think it is in the public interest; it is definite and it is urgent. But how will you get over sub-rule (*iii*) of Indian Legislative Rule 12? I will read it.

"(*iii*) The motion must not revive discussion on a matter which has been discussed in the same session."

It was discussed yesterday by the Food Member, and also by you; but you did not dilate at length upon it.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: May I draw your attention to this that it was not discussed because we had no knowledge of the fact.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: It does not matter to me.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: It is marked "Confidential" by the Government and it was only yesterday evening when the Honourable the Food Member was speaking that we first came to know of it.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You took an hour and a half. You were midway in your speech when the Honourable the Food Member brought this to your notice. There was nothing to prevent your taking half an hour more on this important matter.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: May I respectfully submit that the information first came to me in reply to one of the supplementary questions which I put to Mr. Sen whether Government has taken any action or not? He gave us the information without specific mention of the terms of this order. We did not know the terms. Therefore I have used the word "terms".

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: That does not matter very much.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I suggest your asking the Honourable Member whether he has any objection or not?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I do not think this is in order and I am not going to create a precedent. All the same I will ask the Honourable Mr. Sen what he has to say.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN (Nominated Official): Sir, as you have observed, this subject was discussed in the course of the debate yesterday and the Honourable the Food Member gave the reasons very clearly why this order had been issued. Questions were also put to me and I gave certain information. The point on which Mr. Hossain Imam is not quite satisfied is whether the present prices are considered to be the proper prices. I have definitely stated that these prices are considered by the Government of India as the right prices and we see no reason why these prices should be changed at this stage. I may mention that this subject was brought up during the last Food Conference which was attended by the Premier of Sind and there also the Sind Government definitely committed themselves to the view that the prices ruling in Sind were the proper prices. I do not see what other information the Honourable Member requires. I object to this Motion.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I hold that the Motion is not in order and I reject it.

RESOLUTION *RE* REMOVAL OF RESTRICTIONS ON PUBLICATION OF NEWS.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU (United Provinces Northern: Non-Muhammadan): Mr. President, I may remind the House that the Resolution which I moved the other day runs as follows:—

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to remove all restrictions on the publication of news not relating to the war and in particular news relating to the internal political conditions and the economic well-being of the people, and to persuade the Provincial Governments to adopt the same policy."

Sir, the question of the freedom of the press has been discussed in both the Houses of the Central Legislature more than once. It is not necessary for me therefore to give a history of the censorship that has been imposed on the press. I may, however, say generally speaking that the system of 'press advising' began soon after the war.

Subsequently Press Advisory Committees were established both at the Centre and in the Provinces and a system of consultation with these Committees, on which responsible newspaper editors were represented, was devised. These Committees worked well in the opinion of the Government till August, 1942. In that month, however, the regulations relating to the publication of news were changed and the publication of news unless it was derived from official sources or the Associated Press of India, the United Press of India or the Orient Press of India, or a Correspondent of the newspaper concerned, whose name had been registered with the District Magistrate of the District in which he resided was prohibited. These regulations were issued on the 8th August, 1942. Two days later a Press Note was issued in which it was said that the editor of any newspaper who opposed the measures taken by Government to stop or suppress the political movement would be guilty of an offence against the law. These regulations, Sir, caused considerable dissatisfaction among the Press. The All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference took up the matter in the session held at Bombay in October last. The Conference protested against the restrictions which had been imposed and asked that the regulations issued in August, 1942, should be withdrawn and replaced by an order under the Defence of India Rules banning the publication of reports, unless released to the Press by the Government of interruptions to roads and railway communications, acts of sabotage, strikes or interruptions of work in factories chiefly engaged in war materials which may be of military value to the enemy.

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The Conference also recommended to the editors of newspapers to place restrictions on themselves with regard to the publication of certain kinds of news. After some negotiation between the representatives of the Press and the Government of India, the Government of India decided to withdraw the regulations issued by them in August, 1942, requiring pre-censorship of news of certain kinds and registration of newspaper correspondents. In view of this it was expected that the relations between Government and the Press would be free from friction. The agreement, however, that was arrived at in November last year has not been worked in a proper spirit and complaints have been made either by the Standing Committee of the A. I. N. E. C. or by other responsible agencies regarding the manner in which the agreement arrived at last year has been worked by the Central Government.

Before, however, I deal with the existing practice of the Government of India I should like to refer to the action taken in the Provinces in view of the acceptance of the Resolution of the A. I. N. E. C. by the Government of India. The Central Government refused to issue any instructions to the Provincial Governments on the ground that they were autonomous and had full power to deal with questions relating to the publication of news in the light of the circumstances prevailing within their jurisdiction. Subsequently, I dare say under the pressure of the Government of India, the previous orders were cancelled everywhere except in the Punjab. In the Punjab the old regulations are still in force. Another matter of importance that I should like to draw the attention of the Council to at this stage is that the Government of the United Provinces have now passed orders which have the effect of dispensing with the need of consulting Press Advisers on news and comments relating to the Congress movement and consequential events. We have thus, Sir, on the one side the Government of the United Provinces which inspite of the serious disturbances that took place last year and, as it seemed to many of us, the unjustifiably strong action which they took in certain districts last year, have removed all those restrictions which they imposed on the publication of news relating to the Congress Movement in August last. At the other end, however, there is the Punjab Government which in spite of the fact that there were scarcely any disturbances worth the name in the Punjab sticks to the old policy and refuses to modify it in any manner.

Sir, I understand that the Punjab journalists approached Sir Sikander Hyat Khan shortly before his death in connection with the modification of the Punjab Government's orders regarding the publication of news relating to the Congress movement and certain other allied matters. It was believed that he would give his serious consideration to the matter. His death was, therefore, a great disappointment to journalists in common with other classes of his countrymen. Some time later, according to "The Tribune" of April 8, the editor of "The Civil and Military Gazette" and the manager of "The Tribune" saw the new Premier in response to his invitation and explained to him the grievances of the Press in the Punjab. The restrictions not merely require pre-censorship, as they did in other provinces till they were cancelled, but go beyond even the terms of the regulations. I understand that even censored messages that are received in Lahore are subjected to scrutiny by a censor appointed by the local Government in the Telegraph Office at Lahore. This has the effect of placing newspapers published in the Punjab at considerable disadvantage in comparison with other newspapers. If Government want, I can give scores of instances of the unfairness in which the old order of the Punjab Government has resulted in connection with the publication of news in the Punjab papers. News published in Delhi in papers which circulate in the Punjab cannot be published by the Punjab newspapers unless it is approved by the Press Adviser or the authority whom Government might have appointed to scrutinise the censored messages received in Lahore. Another curious fact is that even items of news broadcast by the All-India Radio may be suppressed in the Punjab Press if their publication is not desirable in the opinion of the Punjab Government. Sir, these two instances must be sufficient to convince any fair-minded person that the Punjab Government is acting in the most unjustifiable manner in connection with the publication of news in the Punjab Press.

We understood some time ago that the Government of India and the Provincial Governments had agreed that news censored in one place should not be subjected to scrutiny in any other place. The Government of India themselves, however, acted in a different way when they prohibited the publication of a statement issued by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee in connection with the food situation in Bengal in August last. Nevertheless the policy that is being systematically pursued in the Punjab is contrary to the relations that ought to prevail between the Central Government and the Provincial Governments. The policy of the Punjab Government is one more instance of the failure of the authorities to have a co-ordinated policy with respect to any matter in this country.

Apart from the difficulties that I have mentioned, the representatives of the Press in the Punjab complain that newspaper correspondents have still to be registered there. They approached the present Premier and pointed out to him their difficulties and laid their principal grievances before him—the grievances to which I have already drawn the attention of the Council. As the Premier himself had invited the representatives of the Press to meet him, it was hoped that the representations made to him would receive his early attention. But up to the present time no change has been made in the old regulations.

I shall now come to the case of Bengal. How control is exercised over the publication of even non-political news there, has become painfully clear to the people owing to the suppression of news relating to the food situation prevailing there. I stated the other day that notwithstanding the severity of the famine in Bengal and the desirability of acquainting the British public with the true state of things there, the authorities took the step of censoring Press messages sent by foreign correspondents and preventing the publication of news the accuracy of which could scarcely be doubted. The effect that this has had on Bengal need not be dwelt on by me. Everyone here I am sure realises that had the British public been informed in August last of the true facts regarding the severity of the disaster that Bengal was faced with, measures would have been taken much earlier to relieve the sufferings of the people, to send foodgrains to India and to bring about that co-operation between the military and the civil authorities which has already led to a substantial improvement in the situation in Bengal. The manner in which the censorship is being exercised is thus not merely a matter affecting the Press and the public at large, but also the Government, who, not feeling the pressure of public opinion, felt disinclined to take those measures which the urgency of the situation demanded. The censorship has not merely prevented the publication of news relating to small events which might not be of any particular importance, but has worked in such a way as to do vital damage to the country. As the Government of India have had the courage to co-ordinate their policy with regard to procurement and distribution, I hope that they will have the courage also to look into the question of the publication of news and see that the Provincial Governments fall in line with their own policy.

Another instance, Sir, showing the great harm that censorship has done in Bengal is that of the cyclone in Midnapore. News relating to it was not allowed to be published in the Press for a fortnight on the ground that it could be of material value to the enemy. Nor was news relating to the discrimination exercised in the distribution of relief allowed to be published in the Press. It is obvious that news of this character cannot give the slightest encouragement to violence or affect the war situation in a prejudicial way. Yet its publication was not allowed, I suppose because the Government thought that it would be contrary to their political interests to allow the public to become aware of the truth.

Lastly, Sir, while dealing with Bengal, I should like to refer to the case of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* which has been asked by the Bengal Government not to publish news and articles relating to the famine situation without submitting them to the Press Adviser. Not content with this restriction they issued an order prohibiting the publication of any reference to their order in any newspaper in Bengal. There is another curious fact in regard to the policy pursued by Bengal which I think should be brought to the notice of the Government of India. If an item of news is published in the Central Gazette or in any Provincial Gazette, it is universally regarded as news which can be published in any

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newspaper. But the Government of Bengal have, I understand, informed the editors of newspapers that the publication of a statement in the Provincial Gazette should not be regarded as a warrant for its reproduction in the newspapers. The absurdity of the policy that is being pursued cannot be demonstrated more effectively than by the course that is being followed by the Bengal Government.

I shall now rapidly refer to cases relating to other Provinces. But, before I do so, I should like to state in connection with the case of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* to which I have already referred that the Press Advisory Committee before whom those articles of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* to which the Bengal Government took exception were placed unanimously took the view that they provided no ground for taking the action suggested against the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. This Advisory Committee did not consist entirely of Indian editors. One would have hoped, therefore, that the Bengal Government would pay some respect to the views of the Committee. Nevertheless, they ignored it and imposed a restriction on the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* owing to which the *Patrika* has been coming out without leading articles since the 10th October, 1943.

There are two other Provinces to whose case I should like to refer before dealing with the practice in those territories which are under the direct authority of the Central Government. The two Provinces with which I shall deal are those of Orissa and Sind. In Orissa too censorship is exercised over news relating to the food situation in the Province and, generally speaking, over news relating to the economic conditions prevailing there. I was reliably informed when I was there that no one could publish even a factual account of the distress prevailing in Orissa without submitting the statement that he wished to publish to the Press Adviser who generally cut out all the more important items. If statements were made regarding death or starvation, or about the failure of the Ministers to tour in the affected areas, I understand they were cut out. In this way the impression was sought to be created that the position was not acute in any district and that the Local Government was taking adequate measures to distribute relief. How much harm such a policy has done to Orissa is well known to those who have seen with their own eyes the distress prevailing in parts of certain districts there on account of the serious shortage of food.

Again, Sir, a newspaper called the *Samaj* has been banned in the Korapur district and the reason given for it is that Korapur district is a partially excluded area and news published in the *Samaj* cannot be digested by the backward people there. Those people are regarded as advanced enough by Government to exercise the franchise. Other newspapers are allowed to be circulated there but the *Samaj*, in the opinion of the Local Government, publishes such stuff as would cause mental indigestion if people there were allowed to read it.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Your time is finished. Please bring your remarks to a close. There are other important Resolutions.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: I will, Sir, only refer to the case of Sind. The *Sind Observer* was asked to deposit a security of Rs. 2,000 under the Indian Press Act, 1931, for a paragraph in an editorial dated the 15th September entitled "Ambedkar and Empire". I have read this article, Sir. There are some strong statements in it. But the strongest statement is that "the British Government should not feel that the situation in India would be free from danger after the war if they continued their existing policy and failed to bring about a reconciliation between themselves and the people". Such statements are made by us daily. The statement of Dr. Ambedkar on which the editor had commented went even further than the comments of the *Sind Observer*. Yet action was taken against the *Sind Observer* under the Press (Emergency Powers) Act by the Sind Government. In this case too, I understand that the Press Advisory Committee advised unanimously against the action which the Local Government proposed to take. But its recommendation was set aside. What I have said above, Sir, shows clearly the manner in which the censorship is working at present in several provinces.

If you will allow me, Sir, I should just like to refer to one or two matters relating to Delhi itself. The numerous instances in which action has been taken against the *Hindustan Times* are too well known to be referred to by me. There are, however, certain other instances which may not be known to the Central authorities themselves. I was surprised to learn yesterday that a few days ago the authorities here took objection to a headline in the *Hindustan Times* to the effect that about one lakh of people were dying weekly of starvation in Bengal. The statement made by the *Hindustan Times* cannot be said to be wide of the mark. Similar statements have been made by persons connected with public life, some of whom are members of this House. Yet, Sir, a meeting of the Press Advisory Committee was called to consider the matter and it was only as a result of a strong expression of opinion on the subject by the Committee that the authorities changed their mind.

Again, Sir, I understand that on the 9th August last the agents of the C. I. D. went to the *Hindustan Times* office in the small hours of the morning and instructed the Managing Editor to defer the publication of the newspaper till the issue for that day had been examined by the authorities. The authorities had no information that any particular item contained in the newspaper was of an undesirable character. They took the action that I have just referred I suppose merely because of the suspicion that the 9th August being the anniversary of the disturbances that took place in August, 1942 the *Hindustan Times* might publish articles which would be undesirable in the public interest.

Sir, I hope that the instances that I have given have made it clear to every member of this House that the agreement that was arrived at between the press and the Central Government and the Provincial Governments with the exception of the Punjab is not being kept in the spirit in many cases. One could understand the restrictions on the publication of news in August, 1942. But things have changed so completely since then that the Government of the United Provinces have felt themselves justified in cancelling the restrictive orders passed by them. Is there any reason why the Central Government and the other Provincial Governments should not follow suit and leave the press the freedom that it enjoyed so long as the system of consultation with the Press Advisory Committees was in force. The Government of India may say that there are no specific regulations at present in force of which any reasonable editor can complain. But, Sir, whether there are or there are not any regulations to which journalists can object, there is no doubt that the practice both of the Central and Provincial authorities is such as to create considerable dissatisfaction in the country. The time has come when they should revise their policy. There is no justification whatsoever for trying to control the publication of news strictly at the present time. I hope, therefore, that my Resolution will find favour with the authorities. The course that I have suggested is not in the slightest degree prejudicial to the public interest. Indeed the instances that I have given show that the freedom of the press is desirable in the interests of the country at large and that the restrictions under which the newspapers have had to work have resulted in great harm to the country in vital matters.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR (Central Provinces : General) : Sir, I rise to support the Resolution so eloquently moved by my Honourable friend Dr. Kunzru. Sir, the press in a country which is ruled by an irresponsible Government, a Government which is not responsible to the Legislature, is always smothered and gagged and the public is not expected to be guided by the views of the press. For this situation the bureaucracy of the country is responsible, because no sundried bureaucracy will ever tolerate any news or comment that is not agreeable to them.

Lord Morley once remarked whether there can be a free Press in a country which is ruled by bureaucracy and he was perfectly right, Sir, in stating that a country which is ruled by bureaucracy which is not responsible to the public opinion can have no free Press, and I, therefore, submit, Sir, that I do not wonder that the Government of India or the Provincial Governments have placed such restrictions on the Press. If the Governments, I mean the Central Government and the Provincial Governments, desire that they should get correct news, if they really desire in the interest of the public that the public opinion should be guided by the exposition

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and comments that appear in a free Press they would never have placed these restrictions and gagged the Press. But, Sir, we know that the Press wields a great influence in moulding public opinion, which is unpalatable to the bureaucracy and therefore under the pretext of an emergency they try to place rigid restrictions on the Press. Sir, one can admit —and I agree; I concede the position—that in times of emergency such restrictions have to be placed on the Press, but, Sir, there is a limit to it and we find, Sir, that the Government under this pretext or that pretext wants to take action against the Press without convincing the public opinion that for issuing certain restrictions such an emergency exists.

I shall bring to the notice of the House the case of a paper in my Province, Sir. I do not want to indulge in personalities and I do not want to disclose the name of the paper, but the Government know that a certain paper in my Province published the news of the resignation of the ex-Chief Secretary of Bengal. That news was published on the 21st of August, 1943. The Provincial Government, Sir, issued an order on the editor of that paper on 28th of September asking the editor to disclose the name of the correspondent within three days. Sir, naturally the editor was on the horns of a dilemma. If he discloses the name he will be held responsible by his colleagues for violating the practice of his profession, he will be going against his professional code of honour. If he does not disclose the name he comes under the mischief of that rule. Sir, the Government of India issued a Communiqué later on supporting, I may say directly, the action of the Provincial Government in issuing that order. I fail to understand, Sir, where was the emergency. The news appeared that a particular gentleman resigned from the I. C. S. on certain grounds. The Government of India ought to have issued a Communiqué contradicting the news but what did they do, Sir, in this matter? They supported the action of the Provincial Government at the same time giving out in their Communiqué that they do not want to probe into confidential matters of the editor. That means, Sir, that not only they want to bring the editors into trouble but those who serve the papers, that is their correspondents they want to bring them into trouble also. The Central Legislature has given the power under the Defence of India Act to the executive to use that power for the defence of the country, for prosecuting the war effort, for maintaining law and order. Now, I want to know, Sir, from the Government of India whether any of these conditions were violated when the news was published by that paper. Sir, the position is this. The Government of India admitted in their Communiqué that they do not want to interfere with the practice of an editor having confidential relations with his correspondents, but they supported the action of the Provincial Government that the editor must disclose the name of his correspondent within three days or he will be prosecuted. I am glad to note, Sir, that common sense dawned after all on the Government of India and the matter was dropped but this is a situation that arises on account of these restrictions.

Let us take the case of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. What has the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* done? The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* simply wrote certain articles about the maladministration of the food situation in Bengal and two orders under the Defence of India Rules have been issued against that paper. One order related to pre-censorship and the other said that the preceding order should not be published in any document; document means newspaper. You issue an order and then you hit the paper in the back with the instruction that the order should not be commented upon. What is the use of saying that we give latitude to the Press; we allow the Press free publication of news and we allow the responsible Press to have fair comments on all news of public importance?

Sir, my Honourable friend Pandit Kunzru has already dealt with the question so eloquently. We had a debate in this House, Sir, last year on this very question. But I am surprised to see that the Government of India, even after the disturbances have ceased and the political situation has eased, have not taken care to modify their attitude and bring pressure to bear upon the Provincial Governments to modify their attitude in this connection. If the Government of India really think that the Press is needed in the public interest, then restrictions of this nasty

kind should be avoided. Mr. Grant Ferris, a Tory M. P., says about your restrictions that they are bad indeed. He has observed that the restrictions about the Press in India are indeed bad, and that this would not happen in England except in the case of war news likely to be of value to the enemy. Of course he can say so. If there had been restrictions of this kind on the Press in England, the Churchill Government would have gone out of office. We know that you are not responsible to us. The only thing we can do is to have a debate in the House and give you some suggestions. We know that if you had been responsible to us you would never have dared to place such nasty restrictions on the Press.

Sir, I hope that the Government of India will reconsider their position in this matter and modify the restrictions which have completely muzzled the Press in India.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH (Home Secretary): Mr. President, Sir, irresponsible, sun-dried bureaucrat as I am—I might remind my Honourable friend Mr. Kalikar that that phrase is now *dé-modé*; "dehydrated bureaucrat" is the latest parlance—I nevertheless credit my Honourable friend with the best motives in moving this Resolution. I am sure he has at heart the interest not only of the Press but of the community at large, to whom a free Press is one of its most valued assets. Government, as I think their policy has amply demonstrated, in spite of what the Honourable Mover and my Honourable friend Mr. Kalikar have said, is also sincerely concerned to see that that freedom is preserved, so far as it can be consistently with the overriding demands of security and the demands of a totalitarian war. I have therefore approached my Honourable friend's Resolution with every sympathy, and have carefully analysed its contents with a view to seeing whether Government's present policy does need any revision in the light of what has been said today on the floor of this House, and, if it does, whether the Resolution moved by my Honourable friend could be regarded as acceptable.

Let me say at once that in order to commend his Resolution to this House it was the duty of the Honourable the Mover to prove that there were in fact restrictions on the Press. How weak was his case he showed at the end of his speech by adding, as an afterthought and probably to spike my guns, that although there might not be any general restrictions in force, nevertheless Government's attitude was this and that. I think, Sir, he showed then that he knew his case was a weak one, and that Government have not imposed general restrictions in order to muzzle the Press. Let me also say that my conclusion on the second question which I mentioned just now, that is, whether the Resolution in its present form could be regarded as acceptable, is quite definitely that no Government in the world could bind itself in the manner required by the Resolution. But Government's policy is entirely in accord with the spirit of that Resolution, though not with its letter.

Having said that, it would probably help if I restated the Government's policy. I say restated, because it has been stated many times, both recently and previously. Government's policy is, and always has been, to rely as much as possible on the restraint voluntarily imposed upon itself by the Press and on co-operation through Press Advisory Committees, and as little as possible on statutory control. On the whole, I think it may be said,—and I say it very gladly,—that the policy to which I have referred has worked well, in spite of the instances gathered from the limbo of the past and from various provinces quoted by my Honourable friend to prove the contrary. The degree of its success has inevitably varied with local conditions. But in some provinces at least I can confidently assert that the system has worked well.

So far as Provincial Governments are concerned, it is the policy of the Central Government to give general guidance to those Governments in the matter of Press control in regard to any particular matter in respect of which they feel such guidance is necessary. Apart from that, their policy is to leave it to Provincial Governments to adjust local control to local conditions, and, in making this adjustment, as the House already knows, they have the benefit of the local Advisory Committees. But my Honourable friend is prepared entirely to disregard the statute. He is prepared to ask the Central Government to invade the provincial sphere at every point. I do not know how his views on that subject would be received in the provinces, but I suggest to him that he is going a great deal further than the provinces themselves would welcome. As it is, provinces know perfectly well the views of the

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Central Government on the general question of policy, and those views are that the less the statutory control, the better.

Well, Sir, I have stated, in very general terms, Government's policy in respect of Press control. Honourable Members of this House will, I know, recognise that in the conditions of a war such as that being waged at present, where the future of civilization is at stake, security considerations must come first, and those considerations inevitably require some restriction on complete freedom, whether self-imposed or, if necessity requires it, imposed from without. It is the desire of Government to make that restrictions as light as possible both in the interests of the Press and of the community which it serves. No authority charged with the grave responsibility which falls on Government in these momentous days could be more anxious than are the Government of India to avoid interfering more than is necessary with the freedom of the Press and to avoid taking any steps likely to impair those good relations with the Press which it is their sincere desire to maintain. Nevertheless, I repeat it is a fact, and a fact which the responsible Press has appreciated and accepted, that there must be news—even factual news—publicity in regard to which must at times be regulated in the interests of the common war effort. As I have said before on the floor of this House, our enemies are waiting and watching to twist and convert to their own use any information which they can obtain regarding conditions in this country and we must be continually on our guard against supplying them with the material for which they crave. I would ask my Honourable friend the Mover of this Resolution to bear that in mind when he makes these references to restrictions or to delay in publication of news regarding cyclones and other disasters in Bengal. He will himself realise that a cyclone which upsets communications, if it is broadcast to the world, is a definite invitation to our enemies to take advantage of that present dislocation and therefore it is definitely in the interests of India and the war that that sort of thing should not be bruited abroad until communications are more or less restored. Well, Sir, in spite of the instances collected by my Honourable friend for the purpose of ammunition, I maintain,—and I think the House will agree with me,—that the columns of the newspapers published in India provide ample evidence of the truth of what I have said, namely, that the Press in India possesses in general a remarkable freedom even in these days when war imposes so many restraints both on the individual and the community. My Honourable friend may not like my saying this, but as he is well aware, visitors from abroad have commented on the freedom enjoyed by the Press in this country which far exceeds anything to be found in the more regimented countries of the world today.

My Honourable friend has exercised his powers of self-deception if he has really convinced himself that the Press in India is muzzled to the extent which he would have us believe. He suggests, though he rather modified this afterwards, that there are in fact general restrictions in force on the publication of news not relating to the war, but I myself know of no evidence in support of this suggestion. I read my daily papers and as regards the famine in Bengal I find ample evidence to the contrary of what my Honourable friend said. If he asserts that there are such restrictions, their effect on the publication of news and on comments thereon is not obvious. It is perhaps the habit of all of us to use different spectacles according to the case which we have to support. Thus I might quote my Honourable friend's speech last Friday made on the floor of this House when he was speaking on famine conditions in Bengal. These are his words:

"It is clear from the facts that are being published in abundance in the newspapers that the severity of the famine is increasing."

In other words, on that particular occasion, my Honourable friend found plenty of evidence in the papers of free publication of news. But when he comes to attack Government on another score he finds the news somehow different.

Well, Sir, my Honourable friend, as I said just now, has dealt with certain individual cases in which he has accused Provincial Governments of being unfair to the Press. I cannot undertake in a debate on the floor of this House to deal with cases of individual orders passed in the Provinces in the light of local conditions and

of the attitude of the local Press. I may, however, observe in passing that I think my Honourable friend Mr. Kalikar was rather unfortunate in his choice of the "Hitavada" case. That case is fortunately, I believe, on the way to settlement. But it was not a case of "common sense dawning on the Government of India". Possibly it does take a little time sometimes for common sense to dawn on the Government of India but in the case quoted by the Honourable Mr. Kalikar, the editor himself sensibly recognised that he had not altogether appreciated the significance of his reference to censorship. However, cases do occur—and here I am sure Honourable Members will agree with me—where through errors of human judgment or for other causes into which I need not now enter, matter may be published in the Press which in time of war and at a time of considerable public apprehension can only do harm. In such cases the Government must in the public interest take action to prevent a repetition of such publicity.

Having said that, it will be helpful to this House if I state the actual position today. The only general restriction of a statutory nature imposed by the Central Government on the Press now in force is the order promulgated under Defence Rule 41, of which a good deal has been made by my Honourable friends opposite on previous occasions, requiring Mr. Louis Fischer's writings about India to be submitted for pre-censorship before publication. Apart from this order, and any restriction orders that may be in force in the Provinces, such control as exists is based on the Press Instructions for war and the agreement reached between the Government of India and the Press in November, 1940, which is commonly known as the Delhi Agreement.

I should now like to say just a word or two about the actual terms in which the Resolution is drawn. The Resolution seeks to draw a sharp distinction between news, the publication of which relates to the war, and that which relates to internal political conditions and the economic well-being of the people. It suggests the possibility of drawing up, without reference to the actual circumstances of the moment, an abstract statement of different types of news classified as related and not related to the war. My Honourable friend presupposes a world very different from that in which the aggression of dictators has plunged us. Totalitarian war is fought and won or lost on the home as well as on the operational front, and, on both, morale has to be maintained. It is clearly not possible, therefore, to draw a dividing line between news, the publication of which relates to the war, and that the publication of which relates to internal political conditions and the economic well-being of the people. It is easy to see how the presentation of news regarding the latter might affect morale and hinder an all-out war effort. Nor indeed do I think that such a distinction would be in accord with the terms of the Bombay resolution of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference or the Delhi agreement.

The Government attach considerable importance to this gentleman's agreement, for implicit in it is the understanding that the Press itself does not wish to create difficulties for Government or to impede their war effort. The phrase "impeding the war effort" necessarily embraces a wide range of activities and it obviously cannot be confined to the presentation of news strictly relating to the war in terms of my Honourable friend's Resolution.

One other point of detail, Sir, before I sit down. Mr. Kalikar in his attack on the "irresponsible Government" made some reference to the fact that the Press could never be free under such a Government as this. I wonder if he read the B. B. C. broadcast in which the views of the present High Commissioner for India in London on press control under a responsible Government were given to the world. If he did not, I commend them to his attention and he may perhaps find an answer to the attack which he made on this particular Government.

Well, Sir, I hope I have said enough to show my Honourable friend that his attempted distinction could never in practice be applied. Nor could any Government, responsible or otherwise, divest themselves, as the Resolution asks them to do, of their responsibility for seeing so far as they can that nothing is said or done which might endanger the efficient prosecution of a war in which so much is at stake.

In conclusion, Sir, I repeat that although Government cannot accept a Resolution couched in those rigid terms, I consider that they are already following a policy

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in accordance with the spirit underlying my Honourable friend's Resolution and they will continue to do so; and I suggest to my Honourable friend that in view of that assurance he might honourably withdraw his Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Mr. President, my Honourable friend Mr. Conran-Smith, instead of facing the facts and dealing with the instances that I have given of the manner in which control over the publication of news was being worked both in Delhi and in the Provinces, contented himself with enuficiating a number of general principles. He asked us to believe that the Government of India wanted to preserve the freedom of the Press and that their view was that the less control there was the better. He also expressed his amazement at the complaint made by me in face of the freedom, the remarkable freedom, to use his own words, enjoyed by the Press at a time like this. The general statements that he made do not carry us far. Whatever the policy of Government may be in theory, it has to be shown that it is being worked in practice in accordance with their claim. If, however, the policy gives rise to practical grievances, grievances which are brought to the notice of the authorities by responsible newspaper men, then I think that it is not enough in dealing with the question of the freedom of the Press merely to say that the Government of India do not wish that any undue restrictions should be placed on the Press.

Another general observation which my Honourable friend made was that I had failed to show that there were any regulations imposing restriction on the publication of news not relating to the war. As regards the Punjab Government, Sir, I stated very clearly that the restrictive orders issued in August, 1940 had not yet been withdrawn there.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: On a point of explanation, Sir, I think I said general restrictions. Obviously Government cannot accept a Resolution like this if it is directed only at the action of one particular Government.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: The Honourable Member when he was speaking should I think have had the fairness to recognise that so far as the Punjab was concerned it had not changed its old practice in any way and that it was acting as if nothing had happened in the country during the last 18 months to warrant the Government in following a new policy.

Apart from this, Sir, the public is not concerned with the precise authority under which restrictive orders are issued. Whether the press is controlled by means of regulations issued under the Defence of India Rules by the Central Government or the Provincial Governments or it is controlled by means of general press instructions, the result is the same. I was fully aware of the fact that the Government of India had agreed to the view expressed by the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference in November, 1942 and withdrawn the orders imposing pre-censorship. But that by itself is not enough. If we find that in Delhi itself, notwithstanding the withdrawal of those orders, the freedom of the Press is being restricted or newspaper men are being made to feel that they cannot publish news which cannot in any way be regarded as prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order without being called to account by the authorities, it is idle to say that the Press enjoys freedom. Sir, I maintain that it was the clear duty of my Honourable friend if he wanted to prove his contention to deal with the specific grievances that I brought to his notice. But he refrained from doing so on the ground that the Government of India could not publicly discuss individual cases relating to the action taken by the Provincial Governments in circumstances of which they only could be fully aware.

Sir, my Honourable friend forgot when he made this remark that the Provincial Governments enjoy power to control the Press under Rules made under the Defence of India Act which was passed by the Central Legislature. If the Provincial Governments derive their authority from rules made by the Central Government it is obviously necessary for the Central Government to see that the authority enjoyed by them is not used in an improper manner. My Honourable friend asked me to consider when I was asking the Central Government to interfere with the discretion of the authorities how my views would be liked by the Provincial Governments. Sir, I did not ask my Honourable friend to interfere in all questions of the provincial policy but there are certain matters, I think, in which uniformity of action is desirable at the present time. The restrictions that I have referred to in my Resolution are a consequence of the war. To ask the Government of India at a time

like this to use their influence or authority in order to bring about uniformity of action between themselves and the Local Governments, and to see that the freedom of the Press is not encroached on, is not to ask that Provincial Autonomy should be done away with. The Central Government themselves have adopted a policy in regard to the procurement and distribution of food which seriously curtails the powers which the Provincial Governments formerly enjoyed. In view of this, it is rather surprising that my Honourable friend Mr. Conran-Smith should contend that I was asking the Central Government to interfere with the discretion of the Provincial Governments in matters relating to their own Provinces. Sir, Mr. Conran-Smith said that it was the general policy of the Central Government to give guidance to Local Governments in respect of Press control where such guidance appeared desirable. It had never been stated before on behalf of the Government of India that this was definitely their policy. Whenever discussions have taken place here regarding the freedom of the Press in the Provinces the matter has been dealt with as if the autonomy of the Provinces would be encroached on if the Central Government brought any pressure to bear on them. I welcome, however, the policy enunciated by my Honourable friend and the request made by me is, I think, quite in consonance with the policy laid down by him.

Sir, my Honourable friend dealt specifically only with one of the cases that I cited and that was the delay in the publication of the news relating to the Midnapore cyclone. He justified it on the ground that it would have proved of value to the enemy and yet he remained absolutely silent with regard to the suppression of the truth relating to the famine in Bengal. The Provincial Governments went so far in suppressing the news regarding the Bengal situation that I understand that the Bihar Government issued an order under the Defence of India Rules imposing pre-censorship on the publication of news relating to the famine in Bengal and prohibiting the prominent display of such news. What effect this has had on the vital interests of Bengal is well known to us. Yet my Honourable friend observed studious silence in regard to this matter.

Another specific case, Sir, which Mr. Conran-Smith referred to was that of the *Hitavada*. My Honourable friend said in reply to some observations of Mr. Kalikar that so far from common sense dawning on the Government of India it was the editor of the *Hitavada* who had admitted that he had not appreciated the connection between the news published by him and the censorship. So far as I know, Sir, all that he has said is that he did not derive his information from any source connected with the Bengal Censor. Indeed, as the Government maintain that the news published by the *Hitavada* was absolutely wrong they cannot at the same time assert that it must have been obtained through the Censor's office or through someone connected with him. Their position is self-contradictory. If the editor of the *Hitavada* pointed out that the Government were under a complete misapprehension in thinking that there had been any leakage of information in the office of the Censor, I do not think that it can be fairly said that he had changed his position in any way. I am fully conversant, Sir, with the facts relating to the *Hitavada* case and I am prepared to assume full responsibility for what appeared in that paper. The editor of the paper consulted me, as indeed he was bound to do, in regard to the order served on him under the Defence of India Rules and it was with my fullest concurrence that he declined to comply with it. I think that the position of the Government of India was absolutely indefensible, and I am glad that, realising this, they propose to withdraw their order.

Sir, whatever the intentions of the Central Government may be, and whatever the advice that they may have given to the Provincial Governments, the manner in which the press instructions are being made use of can leave no reasonable-minded man in any doubt regarding their restrictive nature. It may not always be possible to discriminate, between news of different kinds. Yet I think that the broad distinction suggested by me is of such a character as to be understood by all concerned and is perfectly workable. We all recognise that in an emergency like the present some restrictions have to be placed on the publication of news. But all that we desire is that Government should not go beyond the necessities of the case. Even last year, when the Government was strongly criticized, and perfectly, legitimately criticized, both in this House and in the Legislative Assembly for their policy, no one suggested that no restriction should be placed on the publication of news. All that

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

was wanted was that the Press Advisers should use the vast powers conferred on them in a reasonable manner.

I have shown, Sir, that whatever the policy of the Government of India may be, in spite of the withdrawal of the regulations imposed last year, the practice that is being followed both by them and by several Provincial Governments is objectionable. It is necessary for them to look into the instances mentioned by me and to use their power to guide the local Governments rightly in controlling the Press. This, Sir, was the purpose of my Resolution. I hope that I have made it clear to my Honourable friends opposite that I am not asking that the Press should be left free to decide for itself what news it should publish. It must accept certain restrictions which the situation renders necessary. But I do desire that it should be left the maximum amount of freedom possible. The restrictive regulations that I have complained of were imposed in special circumstances last year. Those circumstances exist no longer. Why is it not possible for Government, then, to revert to the state of things which existed before August, 1942, and to say that both in theory and practice the Press will enjoy freedom that on the whole it did then ?

The situation being what it is, I cannot withdraw my Resolution. I consider it my duty to ask the Council to vote on it.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : Sir, I do not want to add anything to the remarks I have already made, but I should just like to touch on two points referred to by my Honourable friend.

My Honourable friend the Mover has accused me of meeting his Resolution with general observations, and, in doing so, he charged me with not referring in particular to what he called restrictions on reporting the famine in Bengal. I would remind him that, so far as news inside India is concerned, I said in effect that the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and that he himself had recognised in his recent speech that the facts are reported in abundance.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : News of that character is being published now. I complained of the restrictions imposed on foreign correspondents and on correspondents of newspapers in India some time ago.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH : I was dealing with the present and the future ; I do not see any reason to go delving into the past.

As regards the restrictions, as alleged by my Honourable friend, on the reporting of news abroad, that point was adequately dealt with by the Honourable Member for Information and Broadcasting in another place quite recently, and I therefore purposely refrained from dealing with it.

One other point. My Honourable friend—not on purpose, I am sure—has rather misquoted what I said about the *Hitavada* case. I said I believed that the editor had very properly recognised that he had not previously appreciated the significance of his reference to censorship. And that, I think, is a correct statement. That is all that I have to say.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The Motion is that the following Resolution be adopted :—

" This Council recommends to the Governor-General in Council to remove all restrictions on the publication of news not relating to the war and in particular news relating to the internal political conditions and the economic well-being of the people, and to persuade the Provincial Governments to adopt the same policy."

The Motion was negatived.

RESOLUTION *RE* MODIFICATION OF THE CRIPPS PROPOSAL.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : We must proceed to the next Resolution now. We have got a lot of work before us.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL (Bombay : Non-Muhammadan) : If you like, we can adjourn for Lunch, and I will move the Resolution after Lunch.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Let the Honourable Member move the Resolution and make his remarks now, and the discussion will proceed after Lunch.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL : Sir, I move :—

" That this Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to convey the request of this Council to His Majesty's Government to modify the Cripps Proposals so as to make them acceptable to the people of India."

Sir, primarily there are two forces which are concerned with the freedom of India and the settlement of the constitutional issues relating to this country. I deliberately say primarily and I wish the Honourable Members to note my emphasis on this expression. Of the two primary forces, all Indians collectively represent one force and the people of England collectively the other force. We have within our national life important elements, they being Indians of the Congress mind, of the Muslim League mind, of the Hindu Sabha mind and last but not least, the rulers and the people of the Indian States. In the national life of England the important elements are the Conservatives, the Liberals and the Labourites or the Socialists. Mr. Churchill represents the diehard type of Imperialism, the others are more liberal and less of imperialists. Even diehard Churchill, after opposing the clauses of the Constitutional Act of 1935, relented and ultimately wished for its successful working. He has in recent years stated in his speeches that he was not appointed First Minister by the King to preside over the liquidation of his empire and he has repeated the statement again. My reply to him is that if the establishment of responsible government in India amounts to the liquidation of the British Empire, he has been appointed to perform and carry out that glorious mission. No empires endure for ever. They come and go but they are judged in history by the landmarks they leave behind, and the contribution they make towards the advancement of the human race. It has been said by a high constitutional authority that the greatest contribution which the British have made to the progress of mankind is the art of self-government. This contribution will remain incomplete unless and until self-government is established in India. They have already established responsible government in other Dominions and it would be a day of legitimate pride for them when they establish it in India. Mr. Churchill cannot be ignorant of the direction of the King conveyed to the Governor General in the Instrument of Instructions that it was their will and pleasure that their Governor General should so exercise the trust which they had reposed in him that the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within their Empire may be furthered to the end that India may attain its due place among their Dominions. This is not all. The British Parliament went further and with the authority of His Majesty's Government, the Viceroy in his speech made on the 10th of January, 1940, said :—

"His Majesty's Government have made it clear, both through statements issued by myself and in Parliament, that their objective for India is full Dominion Status, *Dominion Status too, of the Statute of the Westminster Variety*".

Before the enactment of the Westminster Statute, the Dominions were *de facto* independent states but they were made independent states *de jure* after the passing of the said Act. The promise of Dominion Status of the Westminster variety was a promise of virtual independence for India. But the time of its fulfilment was left vague and indefinite. Naturally India could not be satisfied with such vagueness. The history of the British Rule in India contains many instances of pledges and promises pleasing to the ear but put off to the uncertain future for their actual fulfilment. The fulfilment of these promises must necessarily entail the liquidation of the British Empire. India has made her position very clear. We want Independence, complete and undiluted. That is the aim of all political parties including the Congress, the Muslim League, and the Hindu Sabha, except perhaps of the Liberal Federation. It was Mr. Churchill's Government that sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India with certain proposals. These proposals conceded to India the right to frame and determine her constitution, though immediately upon the cessation of hostilities, through a Constituent Assembly of her own and the British Government further undertook to accept and implement forthwith the constitution framed by the said Assembly. Sir Strafford Cripps, while explaining these proposals made it clear that it would be open for India to secede from the British Empire if it so chooses. I submit, Sir, that the liquidation of the British Empire has been already agreed upon so far as India is concerned. Mr. Churchill is a master of the English Language and I am sure that some day he would be able to reconcile and explain away his objection to the liquidation of the Empire with the promises and pledges of Independence for India.

Empires, Sir, cause jealousy and produce wars. Britain to my mind is paying a heavy price for her Indian Empire. Berlin and Tokyo broadcasts indulge in effusions over Britain's Indian Empire but have not a word to utter in connection with

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Britain's relations with her self Governing Dominions. A free and strong India will, I believe, be a greater asset to Britian than India in bondage. Let us not forget the adage that virtue is its own reward and vice is its own punishment. There can be no freedom for the world when India, with one fifth of humanity, is denied freedom.

I now turn, Sir, to Strafford Cripps' proposals. They have been aptly described by Mahatma Gandhi as " a post-dated cheque". To this some one added the words " on a failing Bank " which he never uttered. The unanimous rejection of these proposals by all political parties in India demonstrates serious defects therein which make their acceptance impossible. The proposals need substantial modifications and though the scheme embodied therein may apparently be very attractive so far as the future constitution of India is concerned, the arrangement suggested for the actual present is extremely disappointing and does not constitute any real advance. It was simply a rehearsal of the old story that the party leaders should enter the Governor General's Executive Council with the " privileges and obligations" attached to their offices under the Act of 1919. This was in one sense a retrograde step. Our objection to these proposals becomes easier to understand and appreciate when one realises that the Act of 1935 abolishes the Governor General's Executive Councillorships and provides for the creation of a Council of Ministers responsible to the Legislature to be entrusted with the charge practically of all activities and departments of Government, except that of Defence and External Affairs. I do not ignore the limitations imposed which curtailed responsibility in many respects but no popular political party could go back to a discarded system of bureaucratic administration. I am also aware that the powers of the Members of the Executive Council under the Act of 1919 are larger in certain respects than those of the Ministers under the Act of 1935 but they are only of an academic value. Other provisions of the Act negative them effectively.

The last paragraph of Sir Stafford Cripps' Proposals is worth being quoted here :

" During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the Defence of India as part of their world war effort but the tasks of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India.

His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India ".

The language of this paragraph implies that during the period of War , except for the Defence of India as part of the World War effort, responsibility for all Departments of State is to cease to be the concern of His Majesty's Government and by implication the Government of India is to be responsible to the people of India and not to the British Parliament. Sir Stafford Cripps in his early talks with the Congress President assured him that what was contemplated was a National Government. The position of the Viceroy *vis-a-vis* the Government would be the same as that of a constitutional monarch in relation to his Cabinet. The negotiations on this basis went on for some time and it was further agreed that there was to be a Defence Member who would be an Indian and a War Minister who would be the Commander-in-Chief. Then came a sudden change. Some fly in the ointment appeared. I do not know what it was that made the authorities change their mind and harp back upon the expansion of the Executive Council without any real responsibility, thus creating the present political deadlock the solution of which is an urgent and imperative need of the day.

The proposals as they stand tend to destroy the unity of India by opening the door for the creation of more than one union. In the eyes of many patriotic Indians it was a blunder of the first magnitude to encourage the disruption of the political unity of India. The proposals should have been so designed as to preserve the unity of India and at the same time meet the reasonable demands of all communities. I would earnestly request my Muslim friends that they should consider the question dispassionately. Political unity and division are not the factors which help or hinder religion. Communities with greater differences have entered into federation for

mutual interests. If divisions will weaken India, it will also weaken the Pakistan states more.

In conclusion I should like to say to the Government that they should cease to exploit our differences. There were no Hindu and Muslim differences in Burma and yet the Burmans were not given freedom and they were driven to dispair. All that I want is that the proposals should be so modified as to make them acceptable not only to the Hindus, not only to the Muslims, not only to the Princes but to all of them. It is the policy of the Government to favour one section in preference to the other that creates difficulties and once the British Government make up their mind to hand over India to Indians, all such difficulties will immediately vanish and India will settle her internal differences.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN (Leader of the House): Sir, the recommendation contained in the resolution is that the Governor General in Council should convey to His Majesty's Government the request of the Council of State for the modification of the Cripps proposals so as to make them acceptable to the people of India. The position is that in the Cripps proposals His Majesty's Government made certain suggestions for the solution of the political problem in India; and for reasons into which we need not go at this juncture, the important parties in India rejected the proposals. They were then withdrawn. The Secretary of State explained the implications of the withdrawal of the offer in his speech in the House of Commons on the 28th April, 1942, from which I quote relevant extracts—

"It has been asked what is precisely meant by the withdrawal of the draft declaration. What we have certainly not withdrawn is our main object and purpose, namely, that India should as soon as possible, obtain full freedom under constitutional arrangements of her own devising and suited to her own peculiar conditions. On the other hand, the particular method which we suggested for arriving at a constitutional settlement, more particularly the present provincial basis, both for setting up a constitution making assembly and for non-accession, is not meeting with sufficient support for us to press it further. It may be that alternative method might arise which might form a better basis for the definition of boundaries and might give representation for smaller elements such as Sikhs whose natural aspirations we appreciate. It is for Indians themselves to improve on our suggestions if they can.

As regards the interim situation, the particular proposals made by Sir Stafford Cripps in order to secure the whole-hearted co-operation of the Congress as well as the other political parties have, of course, lapsed. But the Viceroy will, no doubt, be willing to consider practical suggestions within the framework of the draft declaration put forward by responsible party leaders, more particularly if put forward jointly and based on a broad measure of agreement."

2. The Secretary of State's speech made it clear that His Majesty's Government would always be prepared to consider agreed suggestions put forward by responsible Indian leaders for modification of the Cripps proposals within the framework of the draft declaration. It is upon the agreement and initiative of these leaders that further advance in this direction must depend. A wide field remains open for agreement whether in regard to the long-term aspect of the Cripps proposals or the interim period aspect, but it is not reasonable to ask His Majesty's Government to modify these proposals when they have no reason to believe that any fresh attempt on their part would meet with general acceptance in India. An agreement among Indians themselves is therefore the first stage before approaching His Majesty's Government with a request to modify the Cripps proposals. The discussion of the resolution in the Council of State will be useful if it brings prominently once more before the Indian public the necessity for an agreed solution.

3. The attitude of the Government being what I have just stated they leave the discussion to the non-official members and will remain neutral in the event of a division.

The Council then adjourned for Lunch till Three of the Clock.

The Council re-assembled after Lunch at Three of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Discussion will now resume on Mr. Govindlal Motilal's Motion.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR SIR BUTA SINGH (Punjab : Sikh) : Sir, the Honourable Member has raised a very important question, a question which demands an answer, and sooner an answer is given the better. The problem of Indian constitution cannot be delayed any longer. The present position is almost intolerable. It is impossible to follow what is the constitutional position at present. Except in four or five Provinces representative institutions which were gradually established have gone by the board. The Governor acts under Section 93 of the Government of India Act and it means nothing less than an undisguised autocracy and action taken by some Governments in raising Provincial barriers in imposing certain surcharges and duties which under ordinary circumstances would require sanctions are imposed and thus the voice of the people is not heard.

Then again at the Centre we have a strange phenomena. The Act of 1935 is supposed to be in operation, but there is no Federal Legislature and the Members of the Executive Council are drawn from various occupations of life and owe no responsibility to the Legislature. They are therefore unable to formulate a policy of permanent use. The result is that there is economic chaos, such as we have witnessed in Bengal.

Honourable Mr. Sen, the Food Secretary, made a confession yesterday when he related the disorganisation which prevented relief under the Famine Code. Who is responsible for the disorganisation ? If there had been a Federal Government at work with well defined powers with unity of will and purpose, India today would have been in a stronger position than before the War. It is a tragedy that Government of India is carried on under the Defence of India Rules.

The morale of public services is rapidly deteriorating. The dis-satisfaction with the existing conditions is deepening in the minds of people, and the policies followed are creating an impression in the minds of the vast agricultural population that Government is divorced from the realities of conditions which are prevalent all over the countryside.

I do not wish to enlarge on the subject but I must say that in the interests of India and England both, the sooner the present position is liquidated the better. I am not enamoured of the Cripps proposals nor of the Provincial Autonomy, but I believe in British Indian Inter-dependence and a strong Central Government which could promote the best interests of India. I support the Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO (Nominated Non-Official) : The Honourable the Mover did not make any definite proposals for improving the Cripps' proposals. What is it that he or the other side want ? In what manner are the Cripps' proposals to be modified ? The Congress rejected the Cripps' proposals *in toto*. They wanted immediate declaration of independence and that the British should transfer all powers to Indians and there is an end of the matter. When the Constituent Assembly is formed and it elects the administrative body it is left to the mercies of this body either to have the Army or not to have it. It rests with them. Therefore, what is the change that the Honourable the Mover suggested should be made in the Cripps' proposals ? That must be known. The Resolution says that the request of this Council for the modification of the Cripps' proposals so as to make them acceptable to the people of India may be conveyed to His Majesty's Government. What is it that is acceptable to the people of India ? As I have said, the Congress has rejected the proposals ; the Muslim League has not accepted them, nor has the Hindu Mahasabha and all the organised bodies in this country have not accepted them. Hence what is it that will suit India ; that would be acceptable to the Indians so that the proposals may be modified according to our requirements, so that we must not look blank, we must not look ourselves, so to say, to be fools to put a proposal like this before the Government ? We must have sound practicable proposals so that we may go upon them. Therefore, the Resolution, Sir, as worded is not at all acceptable to me. If the Constitution Act of 1935 had been acted upon by the Congress and if its proposals were carried out in effect we would have had a constitution working and real democracy and we would have had also a full Swaraj because the Federation as outlined in the Constitution Act of 1935 in itself provides a real self-government. Why should the Act of 1935 be rejected for mere minor difficulties ? If we had worked the Act of 1935 by this

time we would have certainly succeeded to have self-government. I should not be understood to say that the Constitution Act of 1935 is a perfect piece of legislation. There are defects in it but on account of mere minor defects the whole Act should not be rejected and people should not non-cooperate in working it, and they did non-cooperate and therefore lost the chance.

Then, again, the August proposals of the Viceroy are more advanced. They said " prepare a constitution yourselves and we will accept it". He said the constitution should be on the lines of the Dominions *plus* the Statute of Westminster. Now that Declaration has also been rejected and rejected totally without it even being considered or given serious thought as to what it contains or what it is composed of. Then come the Cripps' proposals. He had come to India to assure the people that all the declarations, statements, made about India are true and genuine and *bona fide*. He wanted to impress the people of India about that and he came out with a definite proposal of self-government. He said you have your own constitution. You prepare it yourselves and how is it to be prepared. You elect a body to the Lower Houses and all the Lower Houses will be the electoral college by which means about one-tenth or one-sixteenth of them will be the representatives who will sit round and prepare a constitution. After the treaty has been entered into by the people who have framed the constitution with the British Government, the British Government will transfer power to Indian hands. But the British Government will keep to itself the right to see to the interests of the minorities. Beyond that, no other right is kept by the British Government.

Sir Stafford Cripps was asked what was to be our position as regards entering into treaties with other nations. He said we would be perfectly at liberty to do so. Then he was asked what would be the position of the Viceroy. He said it would be subject to the treaty. If a condition was embodied in the treaty that the Governor General should not be there, then certainly the British Government would accept it.

These facts, Sir, show that the Cripps proposals are such that, if accepted, they would give us self-government of a working kind. They would have resulted in an Indian Union—an Indian Union which would have the right of secession from the British Commonwealth. It would have been a living link with other Dominions, just as we have other Dominions, all independent among themselves, but owing allegiance to the Crown. That is the kind of status that would have been India's had the Cripps' proposals been accepted. Why should all parties reject those proposals ?

Sir, Sir Stafford Cripps further explained that the constitution was to be framed by an Assembly consisting of representatives of the Lower Houses sitting together and coming to an agreement as regards the constitution. One-tenth of the number from the elected body were to be set up to frame the constitution. There also provision has been made for participation by Indian States. His Majesty's Government undertake to implement the constitution forthwith And, bear this in mind, the right of every province that will not accept the new constitution to retain its own constitutional position is maintained. That satisfies the Muhammadans. The treaty that will be entered into by both parties will contain stipulations to this effect. Why should there be any difference of opinion even in this case ? These safeguards are provided for the benefit of the minorities, and no minority has any right to complain.

Then, Sir, the Indian Union is entitled to disown its allegiance to the Crown. The British Commonwealth will have India as an equal member with the right to secede and with all the protection common to the members of the Commonwealth family. No power is reserved to Britain except what is to be stipulated in the treaty. The retention of Imperial troops is a question which is to be settled by agreement. As soon as the new constitution is agreed upon, the British will leave India ; there is no doubt about it. It is absolutely certain that as soon as the new constitution is framed, the changeover will take place.

Now, Sir, these proposals are before us. I would like to know what definite and concrete proposals my Honourable friend advances with a view to improving the Cripps' proposals so that they may be acceptable to Indians. Without knowing these proposals of the Honourable Mover, I cannot give my approval to the

[Sir A. P. Patro.]

Resolution. Has he any proposals which are going to modify the Cripps' proposals so as to make them acceptable to the people of India ? No doubt they have been saying that agreement among various groups or parties is necessary. If there is no agreement, what is to be done ? Is it not the duty of the British Government to solve the problem, to help India when India by herself cannot solve it ? Is it not the duty of the British Government to come to the aid of the Indians ? That is the whole question. It is no use saying that Indians are not capable of formulating an agreed constitution, that we are not able to agree among ourselves. Then why are you here ? You are here as a sovereign Power to intervene and say : " This is the form of constitution which we propose India should have. Better say what your objections are." In the past, at the Round Table Conference, proposals were framed, and yet there was objection at every stage, and therefore they could not act. The Constitution Act of 1935 therefore could not be enforced. The Federation part of the Constitution Act could not at all be brought into operation. The British Government has the power to intervene and help India to stand on her own legs. No doubt the theory of guardianship, of guarantees and safeguards, is there. But why should all that be invoked when straightaway you can help India to solve the problem, even after the war ? If it is thought that the present is not the moment when the constitution can be changed, it can be changed immediately after the war. Britain can in the meantime help India in framing a constitution—not merely in framing a constitution, but in implementing it in such a manner as to enable India to administer her own affairs. India has always been offered lip-sympathy by the British people, who say that democracy will be introduced, that the Atlantic Charter will be applied to this country, and so on. Why all that declaration ? The honest word is enough, and we want honest action, and no more of the plea, " Agree among yourselves and then we will help and prepare the constitution ". If we had the courage to drop our little differences, come together and formulate an agreed scheme, then we do not require the help of the British Government. But we are incapable of coming together. Several attempts have been made. The all-parties conference, the non-parties conference, all these have been tried without any success. If we can come together, that is the best we can do. If we cannot unite, then we must ask the British Government to help us. It is not necessary for any foreign power, the United States or China or anybody else, to come to our help. We should come to an understanding with the British Government. Then Cripps' proposals will be of help, and his idea of self-government for India will become apparent. The other day, before the new Viceroy, Lord Wavell, took charge of his office, the Secretary of State made a statement——

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Please bring your remarks to a close.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A. P. PATRO : ——Mr. Leopald Amery gave an interview to the *Sunday Times* in which he began with a high tribute to the services of Lord Linlithgow and said :—

" There can be little doubt that he hoped that if the constitution scheme could have been implemented, India would not only have acquired immediately a far reaching measure of self-government but in the ordinary course of evolution which would have been hastened by the war it would have obtained by now full and effective self-government as a member of the British Commonwealth. Meanwhile the proposals of Sir Stafford Cripps have remained open and will remain open ".

So, Sir Stafford Cripps' proposals have not been withdrawn completely. They are still open until India expresses a united wish to accept them. In one passage he has said :—

" But the necessary agreement between the various elements in India is still lacking. No doubt such an agreement is made more difficult because the leaders of the most important political parties are under detention and prevented from negotiating with other parties."

That is the whole crux of the question. You shut up the leaders of parties and ask people to agree upon a constitution for themselves. How could that be practicable ? Whose fault is that ? The leaders' detention is not the fault of the British Government. Lord Linlithgow has rightly held that men who are prepared to instigate open rebellion cannot have both ways. They cannot be freed to conduct negotiations with other parties with the assent of the Government and seek to overthrow that Government by unconstitutional means. Lord Linlithgow is not right

to the extent he says it is open rebellion. It has never been declared by Mr. Gandhi and the leaders.

THE HONOURABLE SIR RAMUNNI MENON (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I do not wish to take up the time of the Council for long but shall content myself with offering a very few observations on this important subject. At the outset I must express my satisfaction that the Honourable the Leader of the House has reaffirmed the attitude of the Government, not only of the Government of India but of His Majesty's Government, in regard to the issue before us. That attitude, as far as I can understand it, is simply this. We offered you a constitution which you rejected. You make your own proposals. Let all the important parties and interests in the country agree to a particular scheme and then we shall consider it. It seems to me that in the light of the events which have taken place in this country since the outbreak of the war, that is a very correct attitude on the part of Government to take and that, if I may venture to say so, is the only correct attitude which the Government could take. In passing I may say that that attitude gives a sort of claim to all the interests and communities in this country to be consulted. In the course of his speech the Honourable the Mover referred to certain political parties in this country. He mentioned the Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, and I think he referred to the Liberal Party also. He mentioned Indian States also. In all humility I should like to point out that there are other parties in this country. There are other parties in this country though I admit they are not so well organised and are not so widely known as the other parties named. There is, for instance, the party of Scheduled Castes. There is in Madras the old Justice Party which I confess is not in a very flourishing state now, but there is a party, the non-Brahman Party or the old Justice Party. There is also a party, which has been recently started I believe, the National Democratic Party, which claims to speak for the common man in this country. I am not trying to arrogate to myself any authority or privilege to arrange these parties in the order of their importance. But they are all parties which claim to have the genuine interest of this country at heart. I consider that in any constitution that is framed for this country, all these parties and any other important interests that I may have failed to mention should have an important part to play.

I think there are very serious difficulties in embarking upon a constitutional scheme at this time of day. First of all, the new constitution for India is not, as some people are apt to imagine, simply the completion of the federal part of the Act of 1935 or the restoration of popular Government in the Provinces. As far as the latter aspect is concerned, I do not know what the constitutional position now is. But, as far as I can see, the party which relinquished office soon after the outbreak of the war can resume office tomorrow if it is so inclined. It can come back to power and we can have provincial popular governments restored. In regard to the other aspect of the subject, various important questions have now come to the front. People are not even disposed to accept without further consideration the principle of parliamentary democracy for this country. They would like to go deeper into the constitutional question. There are several sections in this country which will not be prepared to accept unqualified democracy for this country at the present time. That is one thing. Then again, what is the composition of the constituent assembly going to be which you will have to set up in order to frame the new constitution for India. That again demands very careful consideration. These and various other factors will require serious study and it is quite necessary that the nation should be free from preoccupations for its leaders to devote their undivided attention to these important issues. I fear that as long as this war lasts and as long as the present political tension in this country continues it will be impossible to secure an atmosphere of freedom, friendliness and co-operation. Therefore it appears to me that it is perfectly useless for us to think of concerting measures for framing a new constitution for India now. The most that we can do at the moment is to do something to resolve the existing political tension, by which the Provincial Governments can be restored to their former status and perhaps a more Indianised Government set up in the Centre. I do not believe in the so-called national Government for the Centre. The present Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council are, in my humble judgment, as good Indians as you can find in this country. They

[Sir Ramunni Menon.]

are doing their work under exceptional difficulties and at the risk of immense unpopularity. They are men who should be supported in their efforts. There is no reason whatsoever why we should not add a few more Indians, two or three more Indians, if they are available and if they are willing to accept office. That is quite a different thing from the so-called national Government. I therefore feel that taking into consideration all the existing circumstances it is futile for us to ask the British Government to offer better terms to this country.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (Bihar : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I had no intention of intervening in the debate, but I feel that I must take a few minutes. I wish to join in offering my thanks to the Leader of the House for the rather helpful attitude he has taken on this Motion. His attitude, Sir, technically speaking is very helpful indeed. But materially we could not draw much inspiration from what he said. He quoted to us a long extract from the speech or statement of the Secretary of State. He felt, and for a while I also expected, he would inspire many of us, but it left us cold particularly in the sense that we found that the Leader of the House himself could not draw anything from that statement except this fact which I noted down. He said that in the opinion of His Majesty's Government any modification of the proposals which Cripps brought here would not meet with general agreement in this country. Perhaps, an unhappy people as we are, it may be true in many respects. But, if the situation is this that His Majesty's Government fail at this present moment to see any light, then they must make room for other. That is no reason at any rate for them as a Government to say that they shall have nothing to do with the task of making any fresh or new approach to the problem that lies before us. If they do so, do they mean that the people exist for the Government and not the Government for the people. There is deadlock in India. The deadlock has got to be solved, it does not matter how the deadlock came about and His Majesty's Government cannot absolve themselves of their responsibility or justify their existence unless they go on making ceaseless efforts at solving the deadlock. Perhaps there may be many ways of solving it. One or two methods may have failed. But other methods might succeed. When Sir A. P. Patro was speaking he referred to some of the items of the Cripps' proposals and he said that they were so comprehensive that they should have satisfied all sections of people in this country. I shall not rest with the conclusions of Sir A. P. Patro. I shall go to the conclusion and estimate which Sir Stafford Cripps himself arrived at and the way he disclosed his own mind. When he went back to England he said in the House of Commons as follows :—

"I had from the outset made it clear to all those whom I saw that it was not possible to make any constitutional changes *except of the most insignificant kind* prior to the new constitution which would come into operation as a result of the labours of the constitution-making assembly, after the war."

Therefore, the efforts of Sir Stafford Cripps, it is abundantly clear, broke down on the question of the immediate present. When he came here he raised high hopes in the minds of every body that there was something which was going to happen in India which would be a precursor, a harbinger, a forerunner of something brilliant that may be coming hereafter and it was on that rock of disillusionment regarding present arrangements that the whole ship wrecked, and therefore, it is not right to say that if on account of inefficient handling Cripps has failed another person could not make a fresh approach and a more realistic, sympathetic, and fresh study of the Indian problems and try to tackle Indian parties all of whom love their country and none of whom likes the deadlock. We have been advised by all sane men in this country, including the Leader of the House, that it is desirable for Indians themselves to try to come to an agreement and present His Majesty's Government with an agreed formula which will solve the Indian deadlock. Sir, if that were possible, then this Government would not have stayed here for a single second. The very fact that you are here is enough evidence of the fact that we are not able to arrive at a settlement. But you as a Government in your own efforts must not give up the task, because you have once found it insurmountable. Your task, your responsibility does not and cannot end there. You must go on and there is nothing

that should discourage you to such an extent as to feel that the task is insurmountable. The existence of contending parties in no country is ever an excuse for its enslavement—slavery breeds it does not cure dissension. Sir, when the Round Table Conferences were being held and later on when the 1935 Act came to be introduced, was there any agreement in this country ? Which is the party in India that accepted the 1935 Act ? No party accepted it. But the 1935 Act was enforced. Did you, I mean the Government, consult then the wishes of the parties and did you then ask them to come to an agreement ? It suits you now to emphasise on these differences and to show up to the world that we are a people divided amongst ourselves. We are divided, but we are not divided on the issue of independence. We are divided on matters of detail. The only vital question that divides us is this. There is a very strong party in this country known as the Congress Party. There is another party of a later origin which has also gained considerable strength and whose strength has to a certain extent been purposely overestimated by Government, and that is the Muslim League Party. The difference between these two Parties is that one wants one Federation for India, the other wants two Federations. That is the only difference. But both want sovereign rights for all Indians in this country. But, since the Government are not opposing this Motion, therefore, I need not really go on arguing with them at great length. I think I may as well say a few words to my friends on this side and on the other side—I mean, friends who belong to the League, the Congress, and the European Group, and what I would say to all, particularly to the League is this that whether you want one Federation or whether you want two Federations, one thing is certain, that in your Federation too, as in the one that you promise to the Congress or for the matter of that to the remaining population of India which the Muslim League does not claim to represent, you certainly want one thing and that is sovereign rights. I am telling it Sir, particularly to the Muslim League. I tell them that you want sovereign rights. Very well, now those sovereign rights cannot be given to you by the Congress. These sovereign rights cannot be given to you by the Hindu Mahasabha. These sovereign rights cannot be given to you by the Liberal Federation. These sovereign rights can only be given to you by the people who hold them. Now and therefore I would ask you as a Party what are you doing to fight that power that holds those sovereign rights at the present time, to fight them and to wrest those sovereign rights from them ? The whole solution of the Indian problem is that the League should tell the Congress " Well I shall fight with you in the territories where you should have your Hindustan and you must fight with me where I want my Pakistan, but, let us *first* fight the foreign Government out of India and wrest the country from them ; because, unless we have a free India we can neither have Hindustan nor Pakistan." On this question there certainly will be a great deal of argument and a great deal of talk amongst the Parties themselves before an agreement is possible. Let me tell you one thing more. The Congress insisted on all joining one Federation, but said that later on if there were dissatisfied provinces that failed to strike a satisfactory and fair bargain at the Federation counter, they could secede. This is what it should reasonably be. But there can be no divorce before marriage. A short while ago it was seriously suggested that if the deadlock has to be solved free scope should be given to the leaders of the Parties to come to an agreement among themselves. Now the leaders of the most important Party here in India cannot be seen. They are invisible ; they are inside the jails and I think that time is so vital that, in fact, every moment that passes endangers and embitters feelings. Therefore, I would suggest seriously to Government that whereas they have agreed to forward the proceedings of today's debate to the Secretary of State for consideration they should as well emphasize in their own forwarding communication to him the feeling in this country, apart from the feeling of those who are sitting here, that it is the dire need of the hour to come to some kind of agreement here in India with the leaders of Parties and not to rule us by Nazi methods, and that the fullest opportunity should be given to the leaders of the Parties to meet together. You have done so on previous occasions and done so with advantage. There was a time when General Smuts was an enemy of the Empire. He is one of the pillars of your Empire today. Even so you will find that with a change in your attitude those whom you consider to be your enemies will be the pillars of a big Commonwealth, which you will be proud to call the real Commonwealth, in which

[Rai Bahadur Sri Narain Mahtha.]

nations will come and join with their fullest free will—not a Commonwealth where your wealth is your wealth and my wealth too is your wealth, but a Commonwealth which is, as it should be, common to all—and which should not be a Commonwealth of the type it is today. Wherever the Britisher rules he calls it part of the Commonwealth but actually the people there feel that the British Commonwealth of Nations is the British stolen wealth of nations. It should never be that, and I think, that Government should never give up their task in the matter of breaking the deadlock in this country. They should pursue the task and take up this matter with the leaders of the Parties. Never lose hope. After all, they are the people who are fighting for the freedom of their country; they are therefore the first people whom the country admires and if they are fighting for the freedom of their country you should learn to admire them. There was a time when George Washington was looked down as a rebel. His country is your best friend today.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa : Muhammadan) : They are the saviours of England.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA : Yes, the saviours of the Empire in fact, saviours of everything that you hold dear. I think, therefore, that you should make a friendly approach to the problem and not approach it in the same spirit in which Cripps did. He promised a very rosy garden and then when we looked round we found it was a desert. He said : " I am not going to give you anything today. You will get, if anything, after the war, after you have fought the war and after you have decided what you are going to ask for." That is not the approach to a question like this and I would impress on the attention of every Member of this House to treat this question as a serious question. After all it is no use at present quarrelling over what we want because we can get nothing except what we can successfully fight for. Make an earnest attempt at conciliation and to solve the deadlock. Unless that is done no advance can really be made and I tell you this that as the rulers of this land your name will ever remain written down in history as the enslavers of this country unless you take up the attitude of solving the deadlock.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Does anybody else want to say anything ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Mr. President, the Resolution as it is worded is one to which I do not think it would be proper to take exception or to which an opposition can be made on the basis of its words, but the reality of the situation is not exactly what we wish but what is forced on us. The Cripps' proposals, Sir, were rejected by almost all the Political Parties of India, but the reasons for their rejection differed as much as difference could ever go. What was the desirable and the pre-requisite in the eyes of one organisation was the thing which made it a bitter pill for the other. We would not be realists if we shut our eyes to what has happened in the country.

Mr. President, there is no denying the fact that concurrently with this responsibility of our own there are responsibilities of the Government of India as well as of His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government cannot take shelter behind this recurring difference, for denying power to all and everyone. No one is enamoured of the present state of affairs. If there is a unanimity in rejecting the Cripps' proposals there is a unanimity also in saying that the present order of things does not meet with the approval of the people. Why is not that a reason for the present Government to resign on the same principle that if a thing is not acceptable to all, that thing cannot come in. Why keep up this show ? This is Sir, if you will pardon me for saying so, no reflection on the personnel of the Executive Council. Individually, they might be the best of the people but here we are talking of a

Government and as a Government there must be a unity of purpose, a common outlook and a common support for all those who occupy the Treasury Benches. Is that present today ? We are also the children of the soil. We know how things are going on. We know, Sir, where the shoe pinches and we realise that many a good thing is not being done today because of the differences inside the Cabinet. It is a reality. We had a show only in February last of the lack of unanimity in the Executive Council. You cannot shut your eyes to the realities of the situation. But you may say that, concurrently with that, you have also to carry on the King's Government. I ask: Is this is the only way of carrying on the King's Government ? Can there be no betterment ? Is it not possible to take as many of the Political parties as you can with you in the day-to-day administration ? We, Sir, on our part are not hankering after office. We had an offer in 1940 from the Viceroy, and the Qaid-e-Azam rejected it on principle, not because this man was appointed or that man was appointed. He rejected it on the principle that he must know the team with which he had to work. No Political Party likes to sign a blank cheque ; no political party would agree to join a Cabinet of whose composition and character it is not aware. Such things are not done. But the present Administration still believes in individuals. It has not yet realised that the India of the war period is different from the India of the 19th centry. We believe in political parties—in organisations and not individuals. Our fight is not against individuals or for individuals. It is on broad principles of organisation. The organisations have come in. They are permanent fixtures. They will continue. I and you may not live, but our organisations will continue. It is for that reason that we feel that in spite of the rejection by the Government of the demands of the parties at the moment our case is safe. A nations' life is not confined to 50 or 60 years, and it continues and grows and with every year, it gets added power.

But, Sir, may I remind you that four-fifths of the Cripps proposals, from (*a*) to (*d*), consist of the future, and only the tail-end, part (*e*) deals with the present ? Our brothers have got to say whether they attach importance to the one-fifth or to the four-fifths of the proposals. If we attach greater importance to the present and leave the future to take care of itself, you can have an easier compromise with the present Government. But if we insist, as my organisation insists, on the future being the four-fifths—in our opinion it is 99 per cent. of the constitution—then, Sir, there are difficulties ahead, and I think the Government—His Majesty's Government, not the Government of India—owes a duty to this country to come to some decision, just and upright in its character and acceptable to the peoples of India.

THE HONOURABLE SIR A.P. PATRO : You conduct the war at present !

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM : Sir, my Honourble friend does not realise what I said. We regard 99 per cent. of the constitution consists in the future and not the present. So, the conduct of the war does not come in. We are more concerned with safeguarding the future than with the present few years. As I said, we believe in the life of the nation. Nations will not be destroyed by four years of misrule or mismanagement or even bad government. Do not attach undue importance to the thing which is not of paramount importance.

I therefore make it clear that, when I give my support to this Resolution, it does not mean that the Muslim League has changed its position. Its objections to the Cripps' proposals are before the Government, and I need not repeat them. They are fundamental. They are basic. They are such that there can be no compromise on them. We do not ask for anything which we deny to others. We believe in the saying : Let and let live. If I want to have independence, I want that my brothers living in the other parts of India should also have independence. I personally belong to Hindustan. I am a supporter of Pakistan, but I do not belong to a Pakistan province. I have to live and die with Hindus. And yet I feel that my nation will not be happy without agreeing to differ. The trouble arises when we find that we are taunted and accused and in every method adopted to force our hand—

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA : Do you want the Viceroy's veto to stay ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: If we have a constitution in which our desiderata are present, we shall have no Viceroy.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: Then join hands with the other parties.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: We are taunted with the remark that the League is doing nothing, that the best course for the League is to join hands with others in the fight. As I have said, this is not the place where we would have been if the Congress had consulted us and taken steps in unity with us. We would have found ourselves all in jail where others are. But I cannot be a party to extricating you from the difficulties which you have created for yourself and in which you did your worst even against us. I do not wish to enter into controversial subjects at this moment, but I must confess that so far there have been explanations and elucidations, but nothing definite has come from any responsible organisation which would give us any opportunity of co-operating. We are anxious to co-operate. We are not only willing, but anxious to co-operate. We would do everything to co-operate and there is no one who at heart is more dissatisfied with the present state of affairs than ourselves. But the tragedy of the situation is that there are tall talks, but constructive measures are altogether lacking.

Mr. President, when I ask the Government to take steps, I presuppose that there will be a willingness on the part of the peoples living in India to come to a compromise. If that is lacking, you know the proverb that you cannot make an unwilling horse drink. You can take it to the water, but you cannot make it drink. Government may try their best but unless there is sympathy and a desire for understanding, unless there is a more generous outlook, unless there is an assurance that the right of proprietorship which is now being exercised by the United Kingdom is not going to be exercised by others in the name of nationalism, nothing will avail.

That is my only excuse for having kept out of this fray. There was no desire, and we still say there is no desire, to live and let live. The only desire is to substitute for the United Kingdom another organistion. As long as that remains the main plank of some political parties of India, there will be differences. There is the Justice Party of Madras which has also a great deal of complaint against the order of things as it exists at the present moment. There are, of course I do not hold any brief for them—the Indian States about which there is no clarification either by the Government or by your political organisation. You must realise that there are great difficulties in the way of unity. Nevertheless, the immensity of the task or the difficulties of it are not reasons why we should not endeavour to resolve it. By all means endeavour, but do not be content with asking that others should make an endeavour. Let all of us endeavour to come to a settlement, a settlement which will assure the liberty of India at a near date!

4. P. M.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Sir, I have carefully listened to the speech of my Honouroble friend, Sir Parsuram Patro. It was shrouded in paradoxes. He complained on the one hand, "why is it that the Congress did not work the federal constitution?" I quite appreciate that line of argument. There are thinking persons in our country who say that if the constitution had been worked, it would have opened a vista for further progress. But that part of the Act was not brought into operation, as he knows. He wanted the constitutional position to be changed. He did not oppose any advance by India in that direction. In his speech there were two parts. In one part he was satisfied with what was there. In another part he agreed with the ambitions of the other Political Parties in the country for going ahead as much as possible. There are also men in the country who stand for *status quo*. They have not the country with them. Perhaps they think they are stabilising forces. But they must make common cause with the living and dynamic forces in the country. Then alone our future will be bright.

The attitude which the Government have taken is the right one in placing the decision of this Resolution in the hands of the non-official Members of the House. It is a welcome change. More than the Government's attitude, the attitude of my Honourable friend Mr. Hossain Imam has been very helpful. I agree that it is our duty to come to an agreement. It is the duty of all of us. I hope these differences

are only a passing phase in the history of the nation. Before 1916 also there were keen differences and acute controversies. But ultimately the people of this country came to certain agreements. I have no doubt that again they will come to an agreement. But while it is our duty to come to an agreement, it is also Government's duty to help us in coming to an agreement. I realise that if we keep on fighting, the only thing that Government can do is to impose a constitution of their own making. It may be acceptable to all or it may be acceptable to some only. But too much has been made of our disagreement. Let Government try again. In a matter of this importance, the policy of trying again and again is a wise policy and as we must endeavour they must also try to produce a solution of this situation. I therefore request Honourable Members to support this Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Do you want to have this Resolution put to the vote? You have got what you wanted. You have had a discussion on the subject.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: I want to have the Resolution put to the vote.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about Government?

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Government have already said that they propose to remain neutral.

THE HONOURABLE SIR RAMUNNI MENON: On a point of information, Sir. May I know whether the Honourable the Leader of the House would communicate a copy of the proceedings of this debate to His Majesty's Government? That is the usual practice on occasions of this kind.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: Yes, I shall do so, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The question is that the following Resolution be adopted:—

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to convey the request of this Council to His Majesty's Government to modify the Cripp's Proposals so as to make them acceptable to the people of India."

The motion was adopted.

(The Honourable Mr. Narayandas Girdhardas, in whose name stood the next Resolution, was absent when called.)

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Sir, the Resolution* of which I had given notice is of too great an importance to be moved at the tail end of this session. So, I shall reserve it for the next session.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS (Nominated Official): Sir, I do not wish to move† my Bill in this session. I shall reserve it for the next session.

(The Honourable Mr. P. N. Sapru, in whose name stood the next Resolution, was absent when called.)

RESOLUTION *RE* AMENDMENT OF DEFENCE OF INDIA RULES.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU (United Provinces Northern: Non-Muhammadan): Mr. President, I beg to move:

"This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to take steps to amend the Defence of India Rules in order to provide (*a*) that all persons detained at present under the Defence of India Rules be informed immediately, and those detained hereafter be informed within a fortnight of their arrest of the grounds on which an order of detention has been made against them and furnished with such particulars as may be required to enable them to meet the charges against them, (*b*) that they be freely allowed to meet their legal advisers and such other persons as they may require to consult to present their case and (*c*) that the charges together with the evidence in support of them and the explanations submitted by the detenus be placed in each province or administration before a judge or a committee of judges of the Provincial High Court or the nearest High Court, who may be asked to submit a report to the Government concerned on each case referred to him or them".

Mr. President, in dealing with the Resolution that I have moved, the House will no doubt bear in mind the circumstances under which a large number of persons have been arrested under the Defence of India Rules. I do not know what the

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* "This Council recommends to the Governor General in Council to increase the communal proportion of Muslims from 25 to 30 per cent. due to increase in population and separation of Burma, and to fix the quota for Muslims not only on direct recruitment but also to take the promotions and its communal composition in view."

†"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Succession Act, 1925, be taken into consideration."

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

total number of persons in detention at the present time is. But I gather from the reply to a question given in this House on the 2nd August, 1943, that some 11,700 persons including Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Congress Working Committee were in detention on June 1st, the latest date for which figures were available then. The number may be smaller now, because both in Delhi and in some provinces at least steps have been taken to review the cases of either the detenus as a whole or of certain classes of them, but whatever the number of the detenus at the present time may be, I am sure that it is still large. Apart from this, Sir, we all know that there have been many cases in which the executive have used the power to order detention without seriously considering whether the persons whose detention was ordered were really likely to do anything prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order. I know, Sir, of several cases in which persons who were undergoing sentences were served with an order shortly before their release was due ordering their detention under rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules. The defence of Government for their action will doubtless be that the persons who were proceeded against in this way had been guilty of offences against the State and had therefore been convicted by a court of law. It was therefore reasonable to suppose that if they were released they would again take part in activities of the kind for which they were in prison. If this is the line of argument that is pursued, scarcely any person who is undergoing a sentence will ever be entitled to be released. Even though the circumstances in which Government acted were not of an ordinary character, I think that instances of the kind that I have mentioned show that the requisite care was not exercised before persons were detained under rule 129 or under rule 26 of the Defence of India Regulations. It is necessary therefore that the cases of the persons who have been detained should be brought under review by a tribunal or by a committee presided over by a Judge in order to see whether the executive decision can be upheld or whether there are reasonable grounds for believing that the person concerned should be released. Even if cases of the kind that I have mentioned had not occurred, it would have been necessary in the interests of justice that some machinery should be provided for the examination of the cases of persons who have been arrested on suspicion. If they were undergoing a sentence passed by a court of law there would be no reason for asking that another tribunal should be appointed to examine their cases. But action in the cases that we are dealing with having been taken by the executive on pure suspicion, it is obviously necessary that a system should be devised whereby the cases of all detenus might be periodically reviewed and those against whom no reasonable grounds of detention could be found should be set free.

Sir, the principle underlying my Resolution was enunciated in Bengal Regulation III of 1818. Its preamble says:

"The ends of justice require that, when it may be determined that any person shall be placed under personal restraint, otherwise than in pursuance of some judicial proceeding, the grounds of such determination should from time to time come under revision, and the person affected thereby should at all times be allowed freely to bring to the notice of the Government all circumstances relating either to the supposed grounds of such determination, or to the manner in which it may be executed".

My Resolution proceeds on the principle which was accepted by the authorities in an arbitrary Regulation passed by them more than a hundred years ago.

Sir, part (*a*) of my Resolution says that the arrested persons should be informed of the grounds on which an order of detention has been made against them and furnished with such particulars as may be required to enable them to meet the charges against them. And the last part suggests that the charges together with the evidence in support of them should be laid before a committee presided over by a Judge of a High Court. Sir, we all know that a large number of persons belonging mostly to Bengal were detained during the great war. The Government of India or the Government of Bengal appointed a committee several years after their detention to examine their cases and to make such recommendations as it thought proper. I do not remember but I believe that a high judicial officer, probably a Judge of the Calcutta High Court, was the Chairman of this Committee. In any case I well remember that Sir Provash Chundra Mitter, who had been a Minister in

Bengal was one of the members of this Committee. There is thus further support for the principle of my Resolution in the action taken by the Government of Bengal or the Government of India themselves some years ago. But apart from that, Sir, I may point out that the Defence (General) Regulations made in 1939 in England also contain provisions which give considerable support to my Resolution. The Regulation, Sir, with which I am concerned is Regulation 18B of the Defence (General) Regulations, 1939, paragraph 3 of which says:

"There shall be one or more Advisory Committees consisting of persons appointed by the Secretary of State and any person aggrieved by the making of an order against him by a refusal of the Secretary of State to suspend the operation of such an order by any condition attached to a direction given by the Secretary of State or by the revocation of any such direction under the powers conferred by this Regulation may make his objections to such a Committee."

We see, Sir, that in England, which is a free country and which has got a National Government, it has been found necessary, I suppose both in order to secure justice and in order to win the confidence of the public that an Advisory Committee should be appointed to which detenus can appeal against their arrest. Regulation 4 says down that the Secretary of State must see that every detenu is informed of his right to object to his arrest whether he wishes to put forward any objections or not. The clause runs as follows:—

"It shall be the duty of the Secretary of State to secure that any person against whom an order is made under this Regulation shall be afforded the earliest practicable opportunity of making to the Secretary of State representations in writing with respect thereto and that he shall be informed of his right whether or not such representations are made to make his objections to such an Advisory Committee as aforesaid".

This shows that it has been considered necessary in England not merely that an Advisory Committee should be appointed to which detenus may appeal against the orders served on them but also that every detenu shall be informed that he has a right to apply to this Committee to look into his case.

Again, Sir, it was seen that the appointment of an Advisory Committee and the right of a detenu to refer his case to it would be absolutely valueless unless the detenu were informed of the grounds on which he was arrested. It has therefore been laid down that every detenu should be furnished with such particulars as would be reasonably sufficient to enable him to present his case. I would again, Sir, read out the relevant paragraph, that is paragraph 5 so that every Member of the House may know the precise provision made under the British Defence (General) Regulations, 1939, in this connection. The paragraph says:—

"Any meeting of an Advisory Committee held to consider such objections as aforesaid shall be presided over by a Chairman nominated by the Secretary of State and it shall be the duty of the Chairman to inform the objector of the grounds on which the order has been made against him and to furnish him of such particulars as are in the opinion of the Chairman sufficient to enable him to present his case".

Lastly, Sir, paragraph 6 of the Rule that I have referred to provides that the Secretary of State shall make a report to Parliament at least once in every month as to the action taken under this Regulation including the number of persons detained under orders made thereunder and the number of cases, if any, in which he has declined to follow the advice of any such Advisory Committee as aforesaid.

The House will thus see that though the executive has been empowered in England to take action of an extraordinary kind in the present crisis and to order the detention of suspected persons without bringing them before a court of law a procedure has been laid down which would as far as possible safeguard the interests of justice and give every detained person a reasonable opportunity of proving his innocence. My Resolution roughly asks that a similar system should be devised in India. It is true that the Central Government themselves and the Provincial Governments are reviewing the cases of detenus but these cases are reviewed by the executive itself. I suggest, Sir, following the British precedent that there should be an independent body to examine their cases. The particular suggestion that I have made is in accordance with the action taken in Bengal some years ago to which I have already referred. We have here no Advisory Committees of the kind

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that the Secretary of State has to assist him in England. Apart from this, Sir, unless the members of the Advisory Committees were carefully chosen such Committees in India would consist of hand-picked men in whose judgment the public at large would have no confidence. I have therefore suggested that a quasi-judicial procedure should be adopted in order to ensure that no person who should not be reasonably detained is kept in confinement.

In part (*b*) of my Resolution I have asked that the detenus should be freely allowed to meet their legal advisers and such other persons as they may require to consult in order to present their case. I think this is a perfectly reasonable request to which no objection can be taken. Government should, however, ensure that no person who helps a detenu in the presentation of his case is molested by the executive. I say this because of a case which occurred recently————

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Is there similar protection in England ?

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : There is no such regulation in England, but England is a free country, and the executive, which has been armed with extraordinary powers, is responsible to Parliament. But apart from this, if a man is to be given a reasonable chance of defending himself, why should he not be allowed the assistance either of a legal adviser or of such other persons as might enable him to present his case effectively? However innocent a person may be, he may be unable to present his case in the same manner as one trained to deal with evidence and marshal facts can do. A lawyer, even though he cannot alter the facts, will be able to help the detenus to put forward their defence in a better form, in a better and more convincing form, than in a majority of the cases they would be able to do themselves. A man's case may be strong, and yet because of his inability to present it properly, his representations may carry no weight with the authorities. The same case, however, when represented in another manner, may appear to be important enough to be gone into carefully by the executive.

Sir, I am not asking that the Defence of India Act should be abrogated, or that rules 26 and 129 should be done away with. All that I am asking for is that, in view of the indiscriminate manner in which persons were arrested last year, a procedure should be laid down which would enable these detenus to put forward reasonable grounds to show that they had been arrested without sufficient cause. The last word would still remain with the executive ; it would in no circumstances be under any compulsion to accept the recommendations of any committee that may be appointed to review the cases of the detenus. With these safeguards, I do not see why there should be any hesitation on the part of Government in accepting the request contained in my Resolution.

There is, Sir, one aspect of the Resolution which I have not yet touched on. Part (*a*) of my Resolution refers to persons already in detention and those who might be detained hereafter. People who are in detention now, that is, those who have been in detention for a long time, are being detained under rule 26. Those, however, to whom rule 26 has not been applied can be detained only under rule 129, which enables the executive to detain a man for a period of two months only at a time. Now, I am anxious that the procedure that I have laid down for the scrutiny of cases should be applied not merely to persons detained under rule 26 but also to those who have been detained under rule 129. I know of cases of several persons who were detained for two months under rule 129 without any reasonable ground for suspicion. They had no means, while they were in detention, of presenting their case to the authorities, and in some cases they were treated in a manner which bordered on pure oppression. Now, if the persons detained under rule 129 could appeal to a committee of a quasi-judicial character and bring all circumstances relating to their arrest including their treatment to its notice, I am sure that not merely would the executive be more careful in ordering the arrest of suspected persons, but also that the detenus would be treated with greater consideration than they have been received in some cases up to the present time. Apart from this, there is no reason why a person who had been detained for a short period should not be given an opportunity of showing that he is innocent and securing his release well before the period of two months laid down in rule 129 expires.

Sir, the circumstances in which a large number of persons were arrested are known to the House. The situation last year was an extraordinary one. But circumstances have altered considerably since then. Indeed, I can say that things have returned to the normal.

There is therefore no reason, in my opinion, why thousands of people should be detained in jails without having been brought to trial. Whatever executive grounds there might have been for their arrest last year, there is no justification in the present circumstances for not setting them at liberty. I think I would have been perfectly justified had I asked that, in view of the altered situation, Government should set free all those who were arrested last year. But my Resolution contains a much more modest request. It only asks that those who are in detention should be provided with some means of showing that the action of the executive was not justified. As Government themselves are reviewing the cases of the detenus there is no reason why they should oppose my Resolution. I am not satisfied with Government's own review of the cases of the detenus. I want that the judgment of an impartial authority should be brought to bear on the facts and the evidence in support of the action taken by the Government. The procedure suggested by me would not merely be more just to the arrested persons but would also enable the public to feel that persons were not being arbitrarily detained at the present time even though their arrest might not be the result of judicial proceeding. Sir, I move.

THE HONOURABLE SIR REGINALD MAXWELL (Home Member): Sir, I hope that this Honourable House will not approach this Resolution with any feeling of prejudice against the use of rule 26 for the purpose of detention of persons without trial. The Honourable Pandit Kunzru himself said that he did not wish to propose that the right of detention created by this rule should be abrogated altogether. But from his handling of the subject it was evident that some prejudice was latent in his mind against the use of such powers by the executive authority. I want first of all to remind this House that in time of war every Government must be armed with the power to deprive certain persons of their liberty for reasons connected with the defence of the country. This is a power which must and can only be exercised by the executive authority. Only the executive authority can judge the probable effect of certain actions on the defence of the country or on the internal situation. Much has been said of the need of judicial interposition. But I would remind this House that the purpose of a judiciary is entirely different. Judges have to decide on evidence placed before them whether certain things have happened or not or whether certain sections of law apply or not. They only have to see that the law is properly applied to the circumstances before them. They have not got to exercise their judgment as to the probable effect of their decisions on any one else or on the country as a whole. They are not in a position to exercise a judicial discretion or judgment in regard to matters of which they have no knowledge, matters which in the nature of things must rest only within the knowledge of the executive authorities, and that is one reason why I am unable to accept the principle underlying part (c) of the Resolution that after the executive authority has exercised its responsibility for securing the safety or defence of India, some judicial authority should be brought in and that that judicial authority would be better qualified than the executive to decide what ought to be done. I fully admit the great value of the judicial authorities as a tribunal of appeal and as an ultimate recourse of persons who are wronged or who feel themselves to be wronged. We have in the past seen many persons affected by orders under rule 26 approaching the courts and we have paid great attention to the remarks which the courts have made on these cases. But it will be apparent from the judgments of the High Courts themselves that they do not conceive themselves as placed in opposition, by virtue of their judicial capacity, to the exercise by the executive of these extraordinary powers in war. It appeared to me as I listened to the Honourable the Mover that the reason for which he moved this Resolution was largely that he distrusted the discretion of the executive authorities in passing orders of this kind. I should much have preferred had he dealt with the matter, not on the merits of individual detentions in regard to which it is quite impossible to generalise, but on the principles of the case. Those principles are those discussed in a certain judgment of the

Calcutta High Court with which I have no doubt the Honourable the Mover was familiar, for he quoted one of the observations made by the Honourable Judges of that Court in one of their judgments. He referred us to the different provisions which exist in Regulation III of 1818 and pointed out that in the Preamble of that Regulation it is stated that—

"When it may be determined that any person shall be placed under personal restraint, otherwise than in pursuance of some judicial proceeding, the grounds of such determination should from time to time come under revision, and the person affected thereby should at all times be allowed freely to bring to the notice of the Government all circumstances relating either to the supposed grounds of such determination, or to the manner in which it may be executed".

The House will notice that the word is "supposed" grounds and that has been held on judicial advice to imply that the Government concerned is under no obligation to supply a person detained as a State prisoner with the actual grounds of his detention. The policy of the Regulation is that a prisoner should be in no better position than to guess why he is placed under personal restraint. So much for the preamble of the Regulation. But the preamble itself is not the law. The operative part of that Regulation is section 5 which reads—

"The officer in whose custody any State prisoner may be placed is to forward, with such observations as may appear necessary, every representation which such State prisoner may from time to time be desirous of submitting to the Government."

That is a mere formal requirement. It does not impose any obligation to inform the prisoner of the charges he has to answer and the only obligation placed on the officer having him in custody is that he should forward his representations to Government. Now, I wish to remind the House that that is exactly the position which exists now in regard to persons detained under rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules. Although there is no explicit provision in rule 26 to allow a detained person to show cause against his detention, there is absolutely nothing to prevent any such person from making any representations he desires to the Government or the authority which detained him and many such persons have in fact made such representations from time to time. Therefore the principle to which my Honourable friend appealed is not so entirely different from the practice observed in applying rule 26 as it stands. He has based many of his recommendations contained in his Resolution on Defence Regulation 18-B of the United Kingdom. I have studied that Regulation myself; I have a copy here. And it need hardly be said that after certain observations made by the Calcutta High Court in one of their cases the Government of India did give very careful study to the differences between that Regulation and the procedure followed under rule 26. But I would point out that these advisory committees to which the Honourable Mover referred which examined the cases of persons detained in the United Kingdom are not judicial bodies. There is no provision in that Regulation for any judicial tribunal. These advisory committees are committees of a kind which can approach these things from the point of view of the executive, not from the point of view of the judiciary. Whether you should have such advisory committees in India or not is a moot point. Everyone must be aware of the extreme difficulty of getting together a number of advisory committees in eleven different provinces staffed by qualified persons, persons whose judgment on the facts at issue would be better than that of the executive government itself. It is not such an easy thing to provide.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Can you not get non-officials with legal exprerience to be on such advisory committees?

THE HONOURABLE SIR REGINALD MAXWELL: You might, Sir; but I was pointing out that legal experience is not only what is wanted. A judicial officer can exercise his judgment on certain facts placed before him as to whether a certain offence has been committed or not. But where he is asked to exercise his judgment on the relations between the probable actions of a certain person if not detained and the public security of the future, then he is in no better position to judge than any executive officer or member of the public, because the thing placed before him is not one on which he is able to exercise judicial discretion.

THE HONOURABLE SIR N. GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR (Madras: Non-Muhammadan): Isn't it a fact, Sir, that over the advisory committees constituted

under the Defence of the Realm Act in England a man with legal experience, fit to become a Judge of the High Court, always presides ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR REGINALD MAXWELL : There is no such provision in the Regulation itself, Sir. This is all I am saying. I am not aware of the precise composition of these committees. But it is quite obvious that if there is such a committee, it would be open to the appointing authority who is the Secretary of State himself to put a judicial officer on the committee, which is not an independent body but one appointed by the authority which passed the order.

THE HONOURABLE SIR N. GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR : My recollection is that Mr. Herbert Morrison admitted in the House of Commons that over every such committee he had put a man with legal qualifications.

THE HONOURABLE SIR REGINALD MAXWELL : It may be as the Honourable Member says, Sir, but I am talking about the character of this committee. What is recommended in the Resolution is definitely a judicial committee, a committee of Judges of the Provincial High Court or the nearest High Court. It is purely a judicial proceeding which is contemplated by my Honourable friend.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : There would be no difficulty, I presume in putting the law in India under the Defence of India Act on the same principle as in England.

THE HONOURABLE SIR REGINALD MAXWELL : I was pointing out no objections in principle. There are no objections in principle, but in practice there will be very great objections indeed. As this Honourable House may remember some time ago at the instance of this Government Provincial Governments appointed reviewing committees to go over the cases of all the persons who were then detained under the Defence of India Rules and it gave rise to a very great deal of administrative difficulty in finding the officers competent to form these reviewing committees in all the various provinces, and it took a considerable time before the necessary bodies could be established. They were constituted *ad hoc* and one could not guarantee being able to reconstitute them at any time when desired. Apart from that, Sir, although it might be possible to find a member to place on such a committee who had judicial experience, he would be lost unless he were accompanied by some competent person having also executive experience and the only persons who would have to be associated with him on the committee in that capacity would most probably be the very persons who were themselves concerned in the passing of the order, some one, for instance, like the Chief Secretary or the Home Secretary of the Provincial Government or someone in a Provincial Secretariat ; only such persons will have within their knowledge the facts necessary to enable such a committee to bring its judgment to bear on the case.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU : May I ask the Honourable Member whether such a procedure was followed in the twenties in Bengal when a committee of which Sir Provash Chundra Mitter was a member reviewed the cases of the persons who were under detention at that time ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR REGINALD MAXWELL : The Honourable Member must be aware that Bengal has had many special regulations in force at one time or another and many special situations to deal with and I do not think it would be relevant to the consideration of the Resolution before the House which is a Resolution relating to a war measure that we should go back to the history of Bengal in 1920.

As I have said, Sir, we have no strong objection in principle to the review of cases by an Advisory Committee if it were possible but we cannot guarantee that it would be possible, and it is extremely doubtful whether any Committee which we could so constitute would be in a better position than the Provincial Government or the Central Government itself to bring a fair and impartial judgment to bear on the case before it.

On other matters referred to in the Resolution, namely, that persons should have the right to make representations against the grounds of their detention and that they should be informed of the reasons why they have been detained, here again the Government of India have no objection in principle and all I can tell the House on that subject is that ever since August last, long before the Honourable

[Sir Reginald Maxwell.]

Member conceived this Resolution, we had the whole matter under the closest examination. I am unable at the present moment to tell this House what decision is likely on that subject. If Honourable Members will wait a little longer they will know but for the moment I am not able, I am sorry to say, to enlighten the House as to the intentions of Government in this respect. All I can assure the Honourable Members is that this matter, this very issue, which has been raised by the Honourable Member in his Resolution, has been and is still under the closest consideration of Government.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: When are you likely to come to a decision?

THE HONOURABLE SIR REGINALD MAXWELL: I cannot say exactly but I suppose after some time an announcement will be made. It may be within a month or thereabouts, but I should rather not give any definite assurance as regards the date because it does not entirely depend on me.

I think, Sir, that I have very little more to add with regard to this Resolution but I might allude to the point on which the Honourable the Mover dwelt at considerable length about allowing legal advice to persons who are detained. He is perhaps not aware that, again at the instance of the Government of India, all Provincial Governments, so far as I am aware, are now allowing persons detained under Rule 26 to have interviews with their legal advisers and these interviews with legal advisers do not count against the quota of interviews allowed to them under the rules——

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA (Bihar: Non-Muhammadan): But what about those who do not know under what offences they have been detained? Of what use would be the legal advice to them?

THE HONOURABLE SIR REGINALD MAXWELL: Well, Sir, that is a matter of opinion, but I am only dealing with the point that if they wish to have legal advisers they can have them. But the Honourable Member's point relates to part (*a*) of the Resolution, with which I have already dealt and about which I am not able to inform the House as to what steps, if any, will be taken in future to ensure that persons detained are informed of the grounds against them.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: May I put a question to my Honourable friend? Can the detenus see their legal advisers by themselves, or have they to do so in the presence of some jail officer?

THE HONOURABLE SIR REGINALD MAXWELL: As far as I can recollect, Sir, they have to see them in the presence of some supervising officer, not necessarily a Jailor. That is an obvious precaution which is necessary, for after all if the interview is purely for legal advice what objection is there to that?

I was going to refer to one other point made by the Honourable the Mover and that is that the principle which he wishes this Resolution to affirm should apply also to persons detained under Rule 129. There, again, the underlying assumption is that these powers are used wrongly and without discrimination. I do not think the House should or could accept it as a general proposition, but at the same time I would remind the House that persons detained under Rule 129 are in no need of such protection. Under Rule 129 itself no person can be detained for more than two months and within that time the authority detaining him has to decide whether he is a fit person for detention or not. As a matter of fact, I should myself regard persons detained under Rule 129 in the light of undertrials. That section only exists in order to give a police officer power to arrest a person at once wherever he sees or believes him to be dangerous, but the detaining authority has then to consider whether any such person should be detained under Rule 26 or released; and therefore I would submit to this House that whatever we may say about Rule 26, Rule 129 does not properly fall within the scope of this Resolution.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Can a man on the expiry of two months be detained for a further period of two months or not?

THE HONOURABLE SIR REGINALD MAXWELL: No, Sir, Unless a formal order under Rule 26 is passed against him the order under Rule 129 cannot be extended.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: It cannot be renewed?

THE HONOURABLE SIR REGINALD MAXWELL: No.

Well, I have only one further remark to make with regard to the speech of the Honourable the Mover. He ended by saying that the situation has now so far returned to normal that the detention of a large number of persons is no longer necessary. He expressed some doubt as regards the number of persons now under detention and mentioned the figure of 11,000 as the figure which he last heard. I have not got the figures for the period later than the 1st of October but on that date the number of person detained under Rule 26 in the whole of India was just under 8,000 and since the number of such prisoners reached its peak the number of persons released by Provincial Governments of their own motion was 7,756; that is to say, they had released very nearly as many persons as those whom they decided to detain for longer periods. I would remind the House that these releases were ordered by the executive authority—that very authority whose judgment and good faith in these matters is impugned. They were ordered without the advice of a Judicial tribunal or a tribunal of any kind, and I think that fact, those figures, should be sufficient to assure the House that the Provincial Governments, or the Central Government, are not detaining prisoners longer than is necessary. I have often given assurances in public that the principle which invariably rules the detention of persons under Rule 26 is that no person should be detained longer than is necessary, but we cannot make a sweeping generalization, as the Honourable the Mover wishes us to do, and say that the situation has returned to normal and there is no need to detain all these persons. Has the Honourable Member forgotten that the war is still going on? Has he forgotten that the Japanese enemy stands on our borders and in the seas surrounding India? Who can see what may happen yet before the end of this war? And I must remind the Honourable the Mover that these persons were detained largely, almost entirely, because their activities were such as to paralyze the defence of India or to interfere with the prosecution of the war. No Government which has a true sense of its responsibilities can, at this juncture, when the Japanese enemy is still undefeated on our borders, agree that the situation has returned to normal or that there is any case for the release of all these persons who have hitherto obstructed the prosecution of the war. Sir, I oppose.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS: (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, with your permission, I should like to enquire from the Honourable the Home Member, seeing that he is here, whether he would allow or rather instruct Local Governments to allow members of the legal profession to inform their clients as to the state of their cases and supply other information? I can give one instance in which an advocate of the Madras High Court was simply taken away one afternoon, and he did not know why he was taken away. He was put in jail. An attempt was made to get from him an account of the expenses of a certain heavy litigation in which I was interested. We could not communicate with him. The answer was that he could only write to his wife. Now, it affects other people. I hold no brief for him; whether he was guilty or not, whether he was rightly arrested or not, I am not concerned to express an opinion. But it was necessary for certain purposes to get certain information from him as to the amount of cost incurred in a particular case so that that information might be given to the Income-tax authorities. And you know, Sir, the Income-tax authorities will not wait for such information, and they will assess on the whole of the amount without deducting the costs. That is one instance.

Again, Sir, there are cases in which members of the Bar were arrested without any notice, and they had no means of communicating with their clients as to the state of the cases in which they were engaged. That affects a large number of people who are interested in the cases. Would not the Honourable the Home

[Sir David Devadoss.]

Member see that these persons do not suffer on account of the arrest of their legal advisers ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR REGINALD MAXWELL: Sir, I am naturally unable to give any reply as regards the specific cases quoted by my Honourable friend. But I shall certainly take note of his suggestion; it seems to me to be eminently reasonable.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: There are many Honourable members wishing to speak on this Resolution. May I know from the Honourable the Home Member whether it would be possible or convenient to adjourn the debate on this Resolution to the next session ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR REGINALD MAXWELL: Yes, Sir; I entirely agree. I have no wish to come in the way of a full discussion.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I am very glad that Government has accepted my suggestion, and I adjourn the debate on this Resolution to the next session. The Council will adjourn *sine die*.

The Council then adjourned *sine die*.

GIPD—M—27 C. of S.—10-1-44—750

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